

*ElizabethanDrama.org*

presents

the Annotated Popular Edition of

THE SUMMONING  
of EVERYMAN

Anonymous.

Written c. 1490-1510

Earliest Extant Complete Copy: c. 1520s

Featuring complete and easy-to-read annotations.

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# THE SUMMONING of EVERYMAN

ANONYMOUS

Written c. 1490-1510

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Personae Dramatis:

*Everyman.*

*Messenger.*

*God.*

*Death.*

Everyman's False Friends:

*Fellowship.*

*Kindred.*

*Cousin.*

*Goods.*

Everyman's True Friends:

*Good Deeds.*

*Knowledge.*

*Confession.*

*Beauty.*

*Strength.*

*Discretion.*

*Five Wits.*

*Angel.*

*Doctor.*

## INTRODUCTION TO THE PLAY.

*The Summoning of Everyman* is the most famous surviving example of the genre of English drama known as the morality play. The play is heavily didactic, intending to answer the question, "how can I be saved?" As a pre-English-Reformation play, *Everyman* very carefully addresses this question through the lens of Catholic dogma.

Though primitive in feel when compared to the fruits of Elizabethan drama which were to appear a little less than a century after its composition, *Everyman* is a surprisingly moving play, and will well-reward the modern-day reader.

## NOTES ON THE TEXT

The text of *The Summoning of Everyman* was initially adopted from Cawley's edition of the play (see footnote #4 below), but was then carefully compared to Walter W. Greg's transcript of the Britwell quarto (David Nutt: London, 1904). Consequently, much of the original wording and spelling from this early volume of the play has been reinstated. Stage directions were adopted first from Cawley, and then supplemented with those of other modern editions. Any additional modifications are noted in the annotations.

## NOTES ON THE ANNOTATIONS.

The most commonly cited sources are listed in the footnotes immediately below. The complete list of footnotes appears at the end of this play.

Footnotes in the text correspond as follows:

1. *Oxford English Dictionary* (OED) online.
2. Crystal, David and Ben. *Shakespeare's Words*. London; New York: Penguin, 2002.
3. Walker, Greg, ed. *The Oxford Anthology of Tudor Drama*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014.
4. Cawley, A.C., ed. *Everyman and Medieval Miracle Plays*. London: J.M. Dent & Sons, Ltd., 1956, 1970.
6. Ryan, Lawrence V. "Doctrine and Dramatic Structure in *Everyman*." *Speculum* 32, no. 4 (1957): 722–35. Retrieved 11/29/2022: <https://doi.org/10.2307/2850293>
7. Lester, G.A., ed. *Three Late Morality Plays*. London: A & C Black, 1981, 1999.
8. Bruster, Douglas, and Rasmussen, Eric, eds.

*Everyman and Mankind*. London: A&C Black Publishers, 2009.

9. Fitzgerald, Christina M., and Sebastian, John T., eds. *The Broadview Anthology of Medieval Drama*. Peterborough, Ontario: Broadview Press, 2013.

## NOTES.

### A. What is a Morality Play?

Morality plays were a popular form of drama performed in England in the 15th and early 16th centuries. The purpose of this type of spectacle was to teach its audience a moral lesson of some kind. The themes could be very serious: *The Summoning of Everyman* (henceforth *Everyman*), for example, instructs its pre-Reformation viewers on the question of how to save their souls from eternal damnation.

A defining element of the morality play was the dominant presence of characters who represented abstract concepts: in *Everyman*, the character of **Everyman** stands in for all of humanity, each individual. Other characters include **Knowledge**, **Beauty**, etc. Consequently, the allegorical nature of the morality plays is innate.

Interestingly, *Everyman* lacks what may be the most well-known character typically starring in a morality play, the tempter in the form of an antagonist called **Vice**. Vice's role was to try to lead the play's protagonist down the wrong path, and as such was played as a comically grotesque villain.

### B. *Everyman* as Translation of a Dutch Original.

*Everyman* is thought to have been written roughly around the turn of the 16th century. From the same period, we have a still-extant script of a Dutch play entitled *Elckerlijc*. The two plays are similar enough that it has been long agreed that one of the plays was a translation of the other. The question has always been, which was the original, which the translation.

Some recent clever linguistic analysis confirms that the Dutch version came first, and that *Everyman* was a translation of the other. For a detailed analysis of the relationship between the two plays, see Bruster, p. 61f.<sup>8</sup>

### C. Background to the Text of *Everyman*.

Other than its being a translation of a Dutch play, little is known of the provenance of *Everyman*. Four editions of the play, whole or partial, and each in quarto form, survive, all published in the very early 16th century (information on locations and dates taken from Bruster, pp. 76-81):

1. **Fragment RP:** published by Richard Pynson c. 1518-9. The fragment exists in two sections, which reside at two separate locations: the longer piece is held at the Bodleian Libraries at Oxford, and the shorter is held privately.

The surviving lines of the shorter fragment correspond to our edition's Act II.356 - Act III.121, and the longer, Act IV.67 to the end.

2. **Fragment BL:** also printed by Pynson, c. 1525-8. Held by the British Library. The fragment corresponds to our edition's Act II.172 to the end.

3. **Britwell quarto:** the earliest complete copy of the play, published by John Skot, or Scott, c. 1521-8. Held at the turn of the 20th century at the Britwell Library, but Bruster tells us it now can be found at the Huntington Library.

4. **Huth quarto:** also printed by Skot, c. 1528-31. Residing at the Huth Library at the turn of the 20th century, but, according to Bruster, now at the British Library.

Nothing is known of the performance history of *Everyman*. **Our version of the play is based on the Britwell quarto.** We will allude to the other editions only in cases in which the text of those editions either sheds light on the interpretation of the language of Britwell, or presents some other noteworthy revelations.

#### **D. The Theology is Everything.**

In 1957, English professor Lawrence V. Ryan of Stanford University wrote an article (published in *Speculum*, a still running journal of Medieval studies) on the theological importance of *Everyman*. Though it has probably not been read by anyone in more than half a century, Ryan's article is worth resurrecting. Ryan argues persuasively that to properly understand *Everyman*, one must understand, at a detailed level, the Catholic doctrine expounded by the play.

Without exception, modern annotated editions of *Everyman* focus on glossing the language of the play, and perhaps also include tips for stage performance. Theological explanations, however, are largely absent, except to the extent of describing certain fundamental concepts, such as the general role of individual characters (but only at a superficial level), or defining for a secular audience some basic concepts of Christianity, such as Communion and extreme unction.

Such an approach, however, is incomplete in a crucial way, and robs the reader of a deeper understanding of the brilliance of the play's structure. The author of *Everyman*, Ryan tells us, did not take liberties with dogma in order to simply present a captivating dramatic tale.

On the contrary, the playwright made extraordinary efforts to craft a play which explains in an exact and meticulous manner exactly how a man may save his soul. The nuances of the religious doctrine are many, and the author made sure to capture them accurately. Ryan explains precisely how Catholic doctrine matches up with everything – and we mean everything – in the play.

No edition of *Everyman* has ever been published which explains to the reader how exactly the play aligns with Catholic dogma at such a detailed level before. This is the first.

**The theological notes of the play, which draw heavily from Ryan, including a generous dose of quotes, are printed in boldface.**

#### **E. A One-Act Play?**

*The Summoning of Everyman* is a play comprised of a single and very long act. The action (excepting the appearance and disappearance of the presenters of the Prologue and Epilogue) is continuous, and there is never a point in time during which no character is present on the stage. Every edition of *Everyman* ever published presents the play as a single act.

However, the play's single-act structure makes it difficult to distinguish between the theologically distinct sections of which the play is actually constructed. Thus, to facilitate ease of reading and to help the reader recognize, appreciate and understand the distinct, yet complex and doctrinally intertwined sections, we have broken up *Everyman* into five acts. The extensive theological notes will enhance understanding of the different acts.

## F. The Language of *Everyman*.

*Everyman* is written in late Middle English. For you, the reader, this means that the original text is readable, once you get the hang of the slight grammatical differences, most of which carried over into the Elizabethan era. For example, the object of a sentence frequently precedes the verb, e.g., Death, in the first act, asks, "Hast thou thy maker forgot?"

Obviously, there is some differing and obsolete vocabulary to negotiate, but one will find that *Everyman* is still easier to read than are the works of Shakespeare. Besides, that is why one reads these plays in annotated form, so that nothing is lost in comprehension.

An interesting feature of late Middle English is that while *reading* the play does not pose any insurmountable problem, one would likely be completely lost if one were to *hear* the play in its original Middle English pronunciation.

The problem is two-fold:

(1) many of the vowels in Middle English were pronounced completely differently than they are today. For example:

a. The letters *i* and *y* were pronounced *ee*, as in *feet*.

Hence, *my* was pronounced *me*, *time* as *teem-e*, etc.

b. The modern diphthong *ou* (as in *house*) was pronounced *oo* as in *moon*. Thus, *account* was pronounced *accoont*, and *would* as *woold*.

(2) Middle English was pronounced phonetically. This is why we have silent *e*'s in English: *love* was a disyllable *lo-ve*, and *worse* was pronounced *wor-se*. Also, the modern silent *gh* that appears in so many English words was originally pronounced as a guttural consonant, as in the German *nacht*: *brought* was pronounced *brokht*, for example.

Put the two rules together, and *nighte* (the modern *night*) becomes *neekh-te*, and *knife* becomes *k-nee-fe*.

Having said all that, by the 16th century, the language was undergoing some major changes, foremost of which was the wonderful phenomenon known today as the **Great Vowel Shift**. This is the period when the sound of *i* changed, for some unknown reason, from an *ee* sound to the open *i* sound of *wife* and *time*, and *ou* changed from an *oo* sound to the modern *ou* of *house*.

Furthermore, the language became dramatically less phonetically pronounced. This is the reason English is easier to speak than to read for those learning the language: we simplified the pronunciations, but kept the old spellings!

At the time *Everyman* was written, the language was straddling the older and newer forms. Thus we cannot know exactly how the play would have sounded to an early 16th century audience, and pronunciation probably varied from actor to actor. And since the verse of the play is unmetrical, we cannot tease out the syllabification either.

(The syllabification of Chaucer's verse is much easier to discern, since he wrote most of it in strict iambic form).

### **G. This Edition's Spelling.**

All contemporary published versions of *Everyman* modernize the language: for example, *shew* is always printed as *show*, *moder* as *mother*, etc.

It is your editor's opinion, though, that something is lost when every early form of a word is modernized. As a result, you will find that in this edition of the play, we keep many of the early forms of the words, in order to give the reader at least a taste of the language as it would have sounded to a 16th century viewer. Hence, we preserve *er* for *or*, *hidder* for *hither*, and *journey* for *journey* where it is spelled so in the text so that it would rhyme with *say* or *delay*.

Obviously, such choices are to a large degree subjective, and we understand that because *run* is kept as *ren*, or *longer* as *lenger*, that it does not mean that you are experiencing the sound of the play exactly as a 16th century viewer would. But, as stated above, we feel this will enhance your appreciation, at least a bit, of the original language of the play.

### **H. Everyman as Poetry.**

*Everyman* is written in unmetred rhyming verse. This means that the lines vary in length, the number of syllables per line without discernible pattern, as if it were prose. However, each line (with a few exceptions) is meant to rhyme with at least one other line.

There are two features of the play's rhyming that are worthy of note:

(1) thankfully, the rhyme scheme changes regularly throughout the play. While there are plenty of rhyming couplets, we frequently find rhymes restricted to alternate lines, and in some cases even more complex arrangements: the Prologue, for example, is comprised of seven three-line stanzas, in which the first two lines comprise a rhyming couplet, but all of the third lines rhyme with each other.

Why are we grateful for the variation? Because an entire play written in rhyming couplets would quickly become tedious, even with the varying syllable counts. Unfortunately, some surviving later mid-16th century plays, such as *Ralph Roister Doister* and *Gammer Gurton's Needle*, were written entirely, and hence drearily, in rhyming couplets.

(2) one will note that many of the rhymes are rather weak. For example, in the Prologue, we find *sweet* rhyming with *weep*, and *Jollity* rhyming with *Beauty*. This is actually a benefit for the play, because if every rhyme was perfect, then the listener or reader might become too conscious of the rhymes, and this would become a distraction. If the rhymes are not heard every time, they fade into the background to some degree, and more perfect rhymes become adornments rather than flaws.

### **I. Everyman Means Everybody.**

When God calls for "every man" to appear before him, God is of course referring to every man *and woman*. Occasionally, we too will use *man* in the annotations to refer to all of humanity, male and female, so as to remain consistent with *man's* usage in the play, and has traditionally been done. We regret this need to point out what should be an inoffensive feature of the English language.

# THE SUMMONING of EVERYMAN

ANONYMOUS

Written c. 1490-1510

Earliest Extant Complete Copy: c. 1520s

HERE BEGINNETH A TREATISE HOW THE  
HIGH FATHER OF HEAVEN SENDETH  
DEATH TO SUMMON EVERY CREATURE  
TO COME AND GIVE ACCOUNT OF THEIR  
LIVES IN THIS WORLD, AND IS IN MANNER  
OF A MORAL PLAY

## PROLOGUE

*Enter Messenger.*

1 *Messenger.*  
2 I pray you all give your audience,  
And hear this matter with reverence,  
4 By figure a moral play:

*The Summoning of Everyman* called it is,

6 That of our lives and ending shewes

How transitory we be all day.

= story.<sup>1</sup>

**Entering Character:** the *Messenger* is a single actor who comes onto the stage to deliver the play's prologue, or introduction. By the Elizabethan era, such a character would be called a *Chorus*.

**Rhyme Scheme of the Prologue:** the Prologue is comprised of stanzas, or sentences, of three lines: the first two lines comprise a rhyming couplet, then the third lines of all seven stanzas, each ending with a monosyllable ending in *-ay*, rhyme.

= beseech. = pay attention.<sup>1</sup>

= due respect.<sup>1</sup>

4: in the form of a morality play.

*moral play* = these plays were called *moralties* beginning in the 18th century, and *morality plays* from the 19th.

= the theme of the play is reflected in the title: the protagonist, named Everyman, has been called to give an account of his life to God, to be judged whether he deserves, on the one hand, forgiveness for his sins and a place in Heaven, or, on the other, a one-way ticket to hell. Everyman and his task together represent the responsibility that *every man* ultimately has to "defend his life" before God.

6: *ending* = "the end of our lives", ie. death.

*shewes* = shows; the preferred form until the 18th century. Pronounced in two syllables so as to modestly rhyme with line 5: *shew-es*.

7: how fleeting human life is, ie. we are earthbound for only a brief period of time.

*all day* = always;<sup>4</sup> properly the Old and Middle English single word and adverb, *alday*.<sup>1</sup>



8	This matter is <u>wonders precious</u> ,	8: the theme of the play is of great moral or spiritual value ( <i>precious</i> ). <sup>1</sup> <i>wonder</i> = wondrously, wonderfully. <sup>1</sup>
	But the <u>intent</u> of it is more <u>gracious</u> ,	9: <i>intent</i> = meaning, purpose. <i>gracious</i> = devout, <sup>4</sup> "full of divine grace", <sup>7</sup> or simply "pleasing". <sup>8</sup>
10	And sweet to bear away.	10: and the lesson the audience members should take away at the play's conclusion is a pleasant one.
12	The story saith: <u>man</u> , in the beginning Look well, and take good heed to the ending,	11: <i>man</i> = a vocative: "mankind, listen". 11-12: <i>in the beginning...ending</i> = an admonition to all individuals to concern themselves carefully with their conduct, from the beginning of life to its end, because of the effect it will have on their chances of getting into Heaven.
	Be you never so gay;	13: "no matter how light-hearted or carefree you are inclined to be now."
14	Ye think sin in the beginning full sweet, Which in the end causeth thy soul to weep,	14-15: "sinful activity is very attractive early in life (when you do not worry about such behaviour's consequences), but you will regret not resisting it in the end (ie. you will be punished in the afterlife)."
16	When the body <u>lieth in clay</u> .	= ie. is buried.
18	Here shall you see how Fellowship and Jollity, <u>Both</u> Strength, Pleasure, and Beauty Will fade from thee as <u>flower</u> in May;	17-19: a conventional warning: "those good things which provide sensual pleasure and satisfaction during your life-time ultimately have no meaning, and will disappear as you get older." The Messenger seems, in part, to be introducing some of the characters we will meet in the play; interestingly, while <b>Fellowship, Strength and Beauty</b> do put in appearances, <b>Jollity and Pleasure</b> are actually absent. <i>Both</i> (line 18) = commonly used, as here, to delineate more than two subjects; in Shakespeare's <i>Venus and Adonis</i> , we find the lines, " <i>And not the least of all these maladies / ...brings beauty under / Both favour, savour, hue and qualities...</i> " See OED def. B.1.b. <i>flower</i> (line 19) = ie. flowers.
20	For ye shall hear how our <u>Heaven King</u> Calleth Everyman to a <u>general reckoning</u> :	= ie. Heaven's or heavenly; a common collocation. = comprehensive ( <i>general</i> ) <sup>2</sup> accounting to God for his conduct in life.
22	<u>Give audience</u> , and hear what he doth say.	= pay attention.
24	[Exit Messenger.]	
	END of PROLOGUE.	

## ACT I.

Everyman is summoned to account for his life  
before God.

*Goods is sitting on the stage,  
surrounded by bags and chests of money.  
On another part of the stage, Good Deeds lies  
weakly, amongst the pages of Everyman's  
book of account.*

*Enter God.*

1 **God.**  
2 I perceive here in my Majesty  
How that all creatures be to me unkind,  
4 Living without dread in worldly prosperity:  
  
Of ghostly sight the people be so blind,  
  
6 Drowned in sin, they know me not for their God;  
In worldly riches is all their mind.  
8 They fear not my rightwiseness, the sharp rod;  
  
My law that I shewed, when I for them died;  
  
10 They forget clean, and shedding of my blood red.  
I hanged between two, it cannot be denied:  
  
12 To get them life, I suffered to be dead;

**Act Descriptions:** all act descriptions are provided by the editor.

**Stage directions:** initial arrangement of characters on the stage suggested by Lester.

**Entering Character: God** may enter the stage and sit on a throne or stand, or he may be on-stage and on his throne from the play's beginning.

3: **creatures** = humans, people.<sup>1</sup>

**unkind** = ungrateful, lacking reverence, indifferent.<sup>1</sup>

4: enjoying the good things in life without concern for what will happen to their souls when they are dead.

**worldly** = of this world, material.

5: a metaphor for the lack of concern men have with their spiritual (**ghostly**) health; **blind** was a common figurative way to describe any lack of spiritual or moral perception.

**sight** = vision.<sup>2</sup>

= acknowledge, perceive.<sup>1</sup>

= on.

= Walker<sup>3</sup> interprets, "the fierce punishment of my justice" (p. 101).

**rightwiseness** = the OED does not recognize this as a real word, but rather as a "transcription error" for the collocation *right wiseness*, a synonym for "righteousness", meaning "the state of being just".

**the sharp rod** = the rod of correction or punishment of Proverbs 22:15; **sharp** = harsh, severe.<sup>1</sup>

9: **law** = divine law, God's commands for how men should lead their lives.<sup>1</sup>

**shewed** = showed, ie. presented, introduced.<sup>1</sup>

**when I for them died** = a basic tenet of Christian theology: Jesus died on the cross to save all mankind from eternal punishment for their sins. The clause reflects the Chalcedonian interpretation of God and Jesus as the same entity.

= completely. = even (the).<sup>1</sup>

= allusion to Jesus' having been hanged on a cross between two criminals who were similarly being punished; in fact, Huth's corresponding line reads, "*I hanged between two thieves, it cannot be denied.*"

12: Christ died on the cross to atone for humanity's sins, and to give eternal life to all those who accept him.

	<u>I healed their feet, with thorns hurt was my head,</u>	<i>them</i> = ie. all people. 13: Lester <sup>7</sup> notes the alliterative contrast in this line between <i>healed</i> and <i>hurt</i> . <i>I healed their feet</i> = allusion to Jesus's washing the feet of his disciples in John 13. <sup>3</sup> The well-known 18th century Biblical commentator John Gill explained the symbolic nature of this humbling, even humiliating, act, as a washing of " <i>he who is regenerated by the Spirit of God, or rather, who is washed in the blood of Christ...such an one is all over clean.</i> " <sup>11</sup> <i>with thorns...head</i> = the Romans forced Jesus, as he was led to his execution, to wear a crown of thorns, mocking him as the King of the Jews.
14	I could do no more than I did truly; And now I see the people do <u>clean forsake me</u> :	= ie. "completely forget about me." <i>forsake</i> = deny, repudiate. <sup>1</sup>
16	They <u>use the seven deadly sins dampnable</u> ,  <u>As pride, covetise, wrath, and lechery</u>	16: <i>use</i> = engage in. <i>the seven deadly sins</i> = "the seven vices that spur other sins and other immoral behaviour" ( <i>Britannica</i> ). <sup>13</sup> <i>dampnable</i> = damnable; the preferred 15th century variant.  = ie. so that. = covetousness, ie. greed. = lust. Missing from the list of seven deadly sins are envy, gluttony and sloth.
18	Now in the world be made <u>commendable</u> :	18: ie. the seven deadly sins have become respectable. <i>commendable</i> = praiseworthy, deserving approval. <sup>1</sup> God may be alluding verse 42:8 of the apocryphal Bible book of Sirach, or Ecclesiasticus, which instructs, " <i>thou shalt be commendable in the sight of all men</i> " ( <i>Wycliffe Bible</i> ). Mankind, God hints, has corrupted this instruction. The verse, which appeared in the Vulgate Bible, was translated from the Latin by the editors of the later (1609-1610) <i>Douay-Rheims Bible</i> as, " <i>thou shalt be...well approved in the sight of all men living.</i> " Unless otherwise noted, all Bible translations in the notes are from the <i>Wycliffe Bible</i> , the only English language version of the Bible existing at the time <i>Everyman</i> was written. Spelling is modernized in all cases.
	And thus they <u>leave of</u> angels the heavenly company.	= the sense seems to be "avoid", "abstain from dealing with", <sup>1</sup> "reject". <sup>3</sup>
20	Every man liveth so after his own pleasure, And yet of their life they be nothing sure.	21: "and yet their own lives are by no means secure" (Cawley, p. 208). <sup>4</sup>
22	I see the more that I them forbear, The worse they be <u>fro</u> year to year:	22-23: the more God refrains from interfering, the worse men behave. <i>fro</i> = ie. from. The last words of lines 22 and 23 ( <i>forbear</i> and <i>year</i> ), spelled <i>forbere</i> and <i>yere</i> in Britwell, rhyme absolutely, being pronounced <i>for-bair-e</i> / <i>yair-e</i> . The unstressed inflected <i>e</i> at the end of a word was ubiquitous in Middle English.
24	All that liveth <u>appaireth fast</u> .	= quickly deteriorate or become worthless, <sup>1</sup> ie. "become

	Therefore I will in all the haste	corrupt" (Walker, p. 102); <sup>3</sup> the obsolete verb <i>to appair</i> carries the additional senses of "to decay" or "to weaken". <sup>1</sup>
26	Have a reckoning of <u>every man's person</u> ;	Lines 24 and 25 rhyme perfectly in Middle English: <i>fast</i> and <i>haste</i> are spelled <i>faste</i> and <i>haste</i> in the quartos, and are pronounced <i>fahs-te</i> / <i>hahs-te</i> respectively. = each individual. The use of the allegorical name <i>Everyman</i> for the play's protagonist is deliberately and inherently ambiguous, as <i>Everyman</i> obviously represents literally <i>every man</i> , ie. every individual, living on earth. The choice whether to print <i>every man</i> or <i>Everyman</i> in the play's first several speeches is the editor's.
28	For, <u>and</u> I leave the people thus alone In their <u>life</u> and wicked <u>tempests</u> , <u>Verily</u> they will become much worse than beasts;	= if. = ie. lives. = calamities, <sup>1</sup> tumults, <sup>4</sup> or commotions. <sup>8</sup> = truly; the adverb <i>verily</i> was commonly used to emphasize a statement's truth value. <sup>1</sup>
30	For now one would by envy another <u>up eat</u> .	= destroy, with secondary metaphorical connection to <i>beasts</i> in the previous line.
32	Charity they do all clean forget. I hoped well that every man In my glory should make his mansion,	33: "would make his home in my glory". See John 14:2: " <i>In the house of my father been many dwellings...for I go to make ready to you a place</i> ", meaning that in Heaven there is plenty of room for everyone. The use of <i>mansion</i> for <i>dwellings</i> does not appear until Tyndale's early 16th-century translation (" <i>In my father's house are many mansions</i> ").
34	And <u>thereto</u> I had them all <u>elect</u> ;	34: and it was to that place ( <i>thereto</i> , <sup>1</sup> ie. God's mansion or glory) that God had chosen ( <i>elect</i> ) <sup>3</sup> for all men to reside.
36	But now I see, like <u>traitors deject</u> , They thank me not for the pleasure that I <u>to them meant</u> ,	= abject or abased traitors. <sup>1,4</sup> = intended for them. <sup>4,8</sup>
	Nor yet for their being that I them have lent.	37: nor has mankind expressed gratitude for their lives; it was a common trope to describe life as a gift from God, one which he could revoke at any time.
38	I <u>proffered</u> the people great multitude of mercy, And few there be that <u>asketh</u> it <u>heartly</u> :	= offered. = ask for, desire. <sup>1</sup> = heartily, sincerely. <sup>1</sup>
40	They be so <u>cumbered</u> with worldly riches, That <u>needs</u> on them I must do justice,	= encumbered, ie. spiritually burdened. = it is necessary.
42	On every man <u>living</u> <u>without fear</u> . – Where art thou, Death, thou mighty messenger?	= who lives. = ie. without dread or reverence of God.
44		
46	<i>Enter Death.</i>	<b>Entering Character:</b> the two complete early quartos of the play include pages filled with woodcut illustrations of most of the characters. <i>Death</i> is shown as a dressed skeleton carrying a coffin, bones scattered at his feet.
48	<i>Death.</i> Almighty God, I am here at your will, Your commandment to fulfil.	
50		<b>51-57 (below):</b> God instructs Death to show Everyman the journey he must unavoidably and immediately take, ie. to his grave and death.

<p>52 54</p>	<p><b>God.</b> Go thou to Everyman, And <u>shew</u> him in my name A <u>pilgrimage</u> he must on him take,</p>	<p>53-54: Death must let Everyman know that it is God's will that he make a journey. The word <i>pilgrimage</i> was often used in the Middle Ages to refer to "the course of life, esp. mortal life as a spiritual journey leading to heaven, a future state of blessedness, etc." (OED, def. 3). <i>shew</i> = show.</p>
<p>56</p>	<p>Which he in <u>no wise</u> may escape; And that he bring with him a <u>sure</u> reckoning</p>	<p>= no manner. 56: Everyman will have to account to God for his conduct in life. <i>sure</i> = trustworthy, honest.<sup>1,3</sup></p>
<p>58 60</p>	<p>Without delay or any tarrying.  [<i>God withdraws.</i>]</p>	<p>57: a key part of the instructions: Death may not give Everyman any time to prepare for the journey, meaning that Everyman will not be granted an opportunity to amend his life before he meets God. 59: while God could exit, many of the editors suggest, as did Cawley with this stage direction, that God either moves to the side of the stage, or sits on a throne, or, if he has been speaking from his throne all along, he may simply remain there, observing the action, for the rest of the play. All stage directions are adopted from Cawley, unless otherwise noted.</p>
<p>62 64 66</p>	<p><b>Death.</b> Lord, I will in the world go <u>ren overall</u>, And <u>cruëly out-search</u> both great and small: Every man will I <u>beset</u> that liveth <u>bestly</u>, <u>Out of</u> God's laws, and <u>dreadeth not folly</u>; He that loveth <u>richesse</u> I will strike with my <u>dart</u>,</p>	<p>62: <i>ren</i> = ie. run; the preferred 15th century form. <i>overall</i> = everywhere, ie. the entire planet.<sup>1</sup> = rigorously,<sup>1</sup> hence "unrelentingly".<sup>7</sup> = ie. search out.<sup>1</sup> = assail.<sup>1</sup> = with no better judgment than an animal. = not following. = who does not fear to act sinfully.<sup>1</sup></p>
<p>68</p>	<p>His sight to blind, and <u>fro Heaven to depart</u>,  Except that <u>alms</u> be his good friend,  In hell for to dwell, <u>world without end</u>. –</p>	<p>66: <i>richesse</i> = riches, wealth; a variant of <i>riches</i>, with its own separate entry in the OED. Huth prints <i>riches</i>. <i>dart</i> = spear; it was a common trope to refer to the <i>dart of death</i>; in <i>Venus and Adonis</i>, Shakespeare alludes to "<i>Death's ebon dart</i>". Medieval portrayals of Death frequently showing him holding or poised to throw a spear. = ie. thus prevent man from entering Heaven. <i>depart</i> = separate, sever.<sup>1,4</sup></p>
		<p>68: unless he gave to charity. <i>alms</i> = could refer to gifts to the needy specifically or praiseworthy behaviour or acts generally.<sup>1,8</sup> The reference here alludes to the character Good Deeds, whom Everyman will need on his side when he meets God. = eternally. Lines 66, 67 and 69 combine to itemize what Death intends to do with Everyman. The placement of line 68, which provides a way for Everyman to save himself, into the middle of the list makes the lines awkward and confusing. Consequently, lines 68 and 69, which rhyme, could easily be inverted to facilitate an audience's ease of understanding</p>

70	Lo, <u>yonder</u> I see Everyman walking: Full little he thinketh on my coming;	Death's point. = look, behold. = over there.
72	His mind is on fleshly <u>lusts</u> and his <u>treasure</u> , And great pain it shall cause him to endure	71: Everyman does not expect Death to come for him at this moment, ie. no one thinks about death, or believes that death has him in his sights.  = pleasures; an obsolete meaning. <sup>1</sup> = wealth.
74	Before the Lord Heaven King. –	
76	<i>Enter Everyman, finely dressed.</i>	76: stage direction by Lester.
78	Everyman, stand still; <u>whidder</u> art thou going	= ie. whither, "to where"; the use of <i>d</i> for <i>th</i> in words such as <i>whither</i> and <i>thither</i> was preferred in Middle English, the <i>th</i> not becoming dominant until the 1530s. <b>Whither</b> was typically spelled <i>wheder</i> , <i>whyder</i> , and <i>whider</i> .
80	Thus <u>gaily</u> ? Hast thou thy Maker <u>forget</u> ?	= jauntily, in a carefree manner. <sup>1,8</sup> = ie. forgotten.
82	<i>Everyman.</i> Why askest thou? <u>Wouldest thou weet</u> ?	= "do you want to know ( <i>weet</i> )?" <sup>1,3</sup> or, "would you know the answer?" (Bruster, p. 188). <sup>8</sup>
84	<i>Death.</i> Yea, sir, I will shew you; in great haste I am <u>send</u> to thee	= ie. sent.
86	<u>Fro</u> God out of his Majesty.	= from.
88	<i>Everyman.</i> What, sent to me?	89: <b>what</b> was frequently used, as here, as an exclamation of surprise, typically followed by a question. <sup>1</sup>
90	<i>Death.</i> Yea, certainly:	
92	Though you have forget him here,	
94	He thinketh <u>on</u> thee in <u>the Heavenly spere</u> ,	94: <i>on</i> = about. <i>spere</i> = ie. sphere; the universal 15th century form. <i>the Heavenly spere</i> = the first of several allusions to the Ptolemaic view of the universe, in which the earth sits at the center, and is surrounded by about a dozen concentric, crystalline <i>spheres</i> ; embedded in each sphere is a planet (the sun and moon were accounted planets), which revolve around the earth. A further sphere held all the stars, and the outermost sphere contained Heaven.
96	As, <u>or</u> we <u>depart</u> , thou shalt know.	= ie. "ere (before) we part"; <i>or</i> is used throughout the play for <i>ere</i> . Note that this orphan line has no rhyming twin. There are a number of such lines in the play.
98	<i>Everyman.</i> What desireth God of me?	
100	<i>Death.</i> That shall I <u>shew</u> thee:	= tell. <sup>1</sup>
102	A reckoning he <u>will needs</u> have,	= will necessarily, ie. must.
104	Without any <u>lenger</u> <u>respice</u> .	= further delay; <i>lenger</i> , now obsolete, was the preferred alternate form of <i>longer</i> until the mid-16th century.
106	<i>Everyman.</i> To give a reckoning, <u>longer</u> leisure I <u>crave</u> :	106: Everyman asks for more time to prepare to meet God; a major theme in this section is that Everyman realizes that

he has not lived his life in a way that will satisfy God, and wants additional time to remedy it. Note that God anticipated Everyman's demurrals back at lines 56-57.

*longer* = spelling was appallingly inconsistent – even within a given work – in the early printing era. In Britwell, we find both *longer* and *lenger* (here in successive lines, no less!) throughout the play. Such internal inconsistency in spelling continued until well into the 18th century.

Lines 102 and 106 rhyme: despite their different modern sounds, *have* and *crave* rhymed exactly in Middle English: *hahv-e / crah-ve*.

107: "(because) this obscure or confusing (*blind*) matter distresses (or perplexes) my mind (*wit*)";<sup>1</sup> due to his sinfully-led life, Everyman is naturally hesitant about meeting God. Lester paraphrases, "I find this strange business disturbing" (p. 68).<sup>7</sup>

= ie. book of accounts, a register of life's deeds; from Revelations 20:12: "*and books were opened, and dead men were deemed of (ie. judged by) these things that were written in the books, after the works of them.*"

= return.

= certain, fixed, or unerring.<sup>1</sup>

= only.

= manner.

= ie. before God; *chief lord* was a common collocation, used to describe the head man in various contexts.

118: the sense of the line seems to be, "collect yourself and let's get going"; The expression *have ado* could also mean "be done", ie. "wrap it up".<sup>1</sup> The OED cites the following quote from 1515, in which *have ado* is used in this latter sense as an imperative before instructing the listener to move along: "*Haue ado lyghtly (meaning "quickly") and be gone.*"

Britwell prints "*Have I do*", but all editors emend this to Huth's "*Have a do*".

119: *weet thou well* = "know this".

*thou shalt...attorney* = Everyman will have no one available to speak on his behalf before God, ie. he will have to "defend his life" alone.

= "who fears no man."

127: Death will seize all men, sparing none.

*rest* = ie. arrest; an aphetic Middle English form.<sup>1</sup>

132: another allusion to a major theme of the early part of the play: death catches men unaware because no one wants

108 This blind matter troubleth my wit.

**Death.**

110 On thee thou must take a long journey:  
Therefore thy book of count with thee thou bring,

112 For turn again thou cannot by no way;  
And look thou be sure of thy reckoning,  
114 For before God thou shalt answer and shew  
Thy many bad deeds, and good but a few;  
116 How thou hast spent thy life, and in what wise,  
Before the chief lord of paradise.

118 Have ado we were in that way,

120 For, weet thou well, thou shalt make none attorney.

**Everyman.**

122 Full unready I am such reckoning to give.  
I know thee not: what messenger art thou?

**Death.**

126 I am Death, that no man dreadeth;  
For every man I rest, and no man spareth,  
128 For it is God's commandment  
That all to me should be obedient.

**Everyman.**

132 O Death, thou comest when I had thee least in mind!

134 In thy power it lieth me to save:  
 Yet of my good will I give thee, if thou will be kind;  
 Yea, a thousand pound shalt thou have,

136 And defer this matter till another day.

138 **Death.**  
 Everyman, it may not be by no way:

140 I set not by gold, silver, nor riches,

Ne by pope, emperor, king, duke, ne princes;

142 For, and I would receive gifts great,  
 All the world I might get;  
 144 But my custom is clean contrary:  
 I give thee no respite: come hence, and not tarry.

146 **Everyman.**  
 148 Alas! shall I have no lenger respite?  
 I may say Death giveth no warning:  
 150 To think on thee, it maketh my heart seke;

For all unready is my book of reckoning. –  
 152 But, [for] twelve year and I might have abiding,  
 My counting-book I would make so clear,  
 154 That my reckoning I should not need to fear.

Wherefore, Death, I pray thee for God's mercy!  
 156 Spare me, till I be provided of remedy!

158 **Death.**  
Thee avaieth not to cry, weep, and pray;

160 But haste thee lightly, that thou were gone that jounay,

to think about it, and therefore no man plans for it by living his life in a moral way.

133-6: Everyman attempts to bribe Death to leave him be!  
 = goods, possession, wealth. = ie. by letting him live!  
 = in offering such a staggering sum, Everyman reveals himself to be fabulously wealthy.  
 = "if (you)".

139: note the line's double negative, a writing feature that was acceptable in Middle English, and one that persisted throughout the Elizabethan era.

140: naturally, Death could not care less about material wealth.  
*set not by* = have no esteem or regard for.<sup>1</sup>

141: nor is Death impressed by powerful people: no man can persuade Death to delay his demise.  
*Ne...ne* = nor...nor.

**Lines 142-3 (below):** Death makes an interesting point: since there hardly exists a man who would not pay Death to put off the end of his life, Death could easily amass a fortune equal to the entire world's wealth if he were to accept such lucre every time it was offered to him!

= if. = accept.

= completely; note the line's nice alliteration.  
 = from here.

= about. = ie. sick; a Middle English form, pronounced *sai-ke*.

152-4: Everyman asks for a dozen more years with which to reform his life, so he may meet God with a better resume.

= therefore.  
 = "find a way to remedy this difficult situation."

= "it will not help you".

160: *haste thee lightly* = "get moving quickly".  
*that* = ie. on that.  
*jounay* = *journey* is frequently spelled with an *ay* to make it rhyme with other words that end with *-ay* (here, *pray* in line 159). (Properly speaking, both words have the extra inflected *e* at the end: *pray-e* / *jour-nay-e*). Both *journey* and *jounay* were employed in Middle English, the latter persisting regularly until the late 16th century.



And preve thy friends, if thou can:

162 For, weet thou well, the tide abideth no man,

164 And in the world each living creature  
For Adam's sin must die of nature.

166 **Everyman.**  
Death, if I should this pilgrimage take,  
168 And my reckoning surely make,  
Shew me, for Saint Charity,

170 Should I not come again shortly?

172 **Death.**  
No, Everyman, and thou be once there,  
174 Thou mayst never more come here,  
Trust me verily.

176 **Everyman.**  
178 O gracious God, in the high seat celestial,  
Have mercy on me in this most need! –  
180 Shall I have no company fro this vale terrestrial

182 Of mine acquaince, that way me to lead?

184 **Death.**  
Yea, if ony be so hardy  
That would go with thee, and bear thee company. –

161: Death gives Everyman the opportunity to find any friends – if he *can* – who would be willing to accompany him on his trip.

*preve* = ie. prove; the preferred 15th century variant. The word suggests that Everyman will be testing out who his true friends are, as not all of them may be willing to stick with him all the way to his moment of death and beyond!

162: *weet thou well* = "as you well know".

*the tide abideth no man* = ancient version of the still familiar expression, *time and tide waits for no man*; however, in the 15th century, *tide* meant *time*, only gaining the additional sense referring to the ebb and flow of the sea around perhaps 1500.

The collocation of *time* and *tide* came to appear in several expressions (e.g., *to keep time and tide*; *to lose neither time nor tide*) in which the words were understood to be what the OED calls "an alliterative reduplication, in which the two words were more or less synonyms;" see OED, *tide* (noun), def. III.13.a-b.

13-4: an expression of basic Christian theology: all men must now die because of the sin committed by Adam and Eve of disobeying, and hence rejecting, God when they ate from the forbidden fruit, having allowed themselves to be persuaded by the tempter (Satan, as the serpent).

*creature* = person, human.

*of nature* = innately,<sup>1</sup> ie. naturally.

= "without failure" or "openly and fully".<sup>1</sup>

= "for the sake of holy charity";<sup>15</sup> this oath will appear several times in the play.

170: "will I not return (to earth or life) soon?"

= "once you are there (at your destination)".

= return.

= truly.

= throne.<sup>3</sup>

= ie. physical or earthly world;<sup>1</sup> a common figurative use of *vale*: see, e.g., Shakespeare's *Henry VI, Part 2*: "*Great is his comfort in this earthly vale*".

180-1: Everyman seems not to have understood Death's offer above (line 161) to try to find any friends to guide (*lead*)<sup>3</sup> him on his trip.

*acquaince* = ie. acquaintance; printed as *acqueynce* in Britwell. This variant does appear occasionally in the old literature, but is not found in the OED. Huth prints *aqueyntaunce*.

184: *ony* = ie. any; the more common Middle English form. *so hardy* = ie. courageous enough.<sup>1</sup>

186 Hie thee that thou were gone to God's magnificence,  
 Thy reckoning to give before his presence. –  
 188 What, weenest thou thy live is given thee,  
 And thy worldly goods also?  
 190

**Everyman.**  
 192 I had wend so verily.

194 **Death.**  
 Nay, nay; it was but lend thee;  
 196 For, as soon as thou art go,

Another awhile shall have it, and then go therefro,

198 Even as thou hast done. –  
 Everyman, thou art mad: thou hast thy wits five,  
 200 And here on earth will not amend thy live;

For suddenly I do come.

202 **Everyman.**  
 204 O wretched caitiff, whedder shall I flee,

That I might escape this endless sorrow? –

206 Now, gentle Death, spare me till to-morrow,  
 That I may amend me  
 208 With good advisement.

210 **Death.**  
 Nay, thereto I will not consent,  
 212 Nor no man will I respite;  
 But to the heart suddenly I shall smite

214 Without ony advisement.

= hurry: an imperative.

188-9: "do you imagine (*weenest thou*) that your life and possessions have been given to you to keep permanently?"

*live* = ie. life; a common Middle English variant.

= supposed; *wend* is a past tense form of *to ween*.

= lent.

= gone, ie. dead.

197: *it* = a bit ambiguous: grammatically, it appears Death is telling Everyman that his life will be given to others; Lester, however, thinks *it* refers to Everyman's wealth and possessions.

*go therefro* = ie. "he will (likewise) lose it",<sup>3</sup> or "it will pass on from him".<sup>7</sup>

199-200: Everyman has always had all his senses about him, yet he refused to choose to live a better life.

*mad* = foolish, unwise.<sup>1</sup>

*wits five* = ie. five wits, the five bodily senses (hearing, sight, touch, smell, taste).

*live* = ie. life.

*five* and *live* = spelled *fyue* and *lyue* in the quartos respectively. The words rhymed absolutely in Middle English, being pronounced *fee-ve* / *lee-ve*. We note that *u* was commonly printed for *v* in the early centuries of English printing.

= ie. without warning.

204-5: Everyman apostrophizes to himself.

*caitiff* = wretch, miserable person.<sup>1</sup>

*whedder* = wither, ie. to where.

205: Everyman senses that he may be doomed to spend a miserable eternity in hell.

= noble, gracious;<sup>1,7</sup> Everyman tries to flatter Death into giving him just one more day to prepare.<sup>8</sup>

208: "with this warning",<sup>3</sup> or "with due consideration".<sup>4</sup>

= to that.

= another example of the double negative.

= strike.

212-3: the lines rhyme: *respite* and *smite* are spelled *respyte* and *smyte* in the quartos, and would have been pronounced *res-pee-te* / *smee-te*.

214: Death mocks Everyman by throwing his own clause above (line 208) back in his face.<sup>8</sup>

*ony* = any.

216 And now out of thy sight I will me hie;  
 See thou make thee ready shortly,

218 For thou mayst say, this is the day  
 That no man living may scape away.

220 [Exit Death.]

222 **Everyman.**  
 Alas! I may well weep with sighs deep.  
 224 Now have I no manner of company  
 To help me in my journey, and me to keep,

226 And also my writing is full unready.

228 How shall I do now for to excuse me?  
 I would to God I had never be get;  
 To my soul a full great profit it had be,

230 For now I fear pains huge and great. –  
 The time passeth: – Lord, help, that all wrought! –

232 For though I mourn, it availeth nought:  
 The day passeth, and is almost ago;  
 234 I wot not well what for to do.

To whom were I best my complaint to make? –

236 What, and I to Fellowship thereof spake,  
 And shewed him of this sudden chance!  
 238 For in him is all mine affiance:  
 We have in the world so many a day  
 240 Be good friends in sport and play. –  
 I see him yonder certainly;  
 242 I trust that he will bear me company,  
 Therefore to him will I speak to ease my sorrow.

END of ACT I.

**advisement** = consultation,<sup>1</sup> ie. warning.  
 = hurry.  
 216: "prepare for this journey quickly (*shortly*)".  
 217-8: no man can escape (*scape*) death.  
 Note the quadruple rhyme within the two lines.

223: note the line's internal rhyme.  
 = guard, save, protect.<sup>1</sup>

226: Everyman's book of accounts (*my writing*) is utterly unprepared (*full unready*) – because there are no good deeds recorded in it yet!  
 = what. = "to clear or defend myself?"<sup>1</sup>  
 = wish. = been born.<sup>1</sup>  
 229: it would have been a greater advantage to his soul if he had never been born.  
 = ie. "thou who hast created everything!"  
 = grieve or lament.<sup>1</sup> = it is in vain.  
 = completed, passed.<sup>1</sup>  
 = know.

235-7: Everyman wonders whom he should ask first to travel with him, then decides it will be Fellowship.  
**complaint** = lamentation.  
 = if. = spoke; the dominant Middle English form.  
 237: "and revealed to him my sudden misfortune!"  
 = my trust or faith."<sup>1</sup>  
 = many times.  
 = been.  
 = assuredly.

## ACT II.

Everyman calls on his friends, family and wealth to accompany him on his journey.

**Theological Notes in Boldface:** The summoning of Everyman is not a loosely connected hodge-podge of religious ideas; rather, it is a carefully crafted play, deliberately portraying in painstaking fashion and order a nuanced presentation of Catholic doctrine. The question for the Renaissance viewer is, "how can I be saved?" The playwright's answer is doctrinally precise, though the details and nuances may not be obvious to the modern reader.

To facilitate a deeper understanding of the dogma behind the action and dialogue on the stage, we present here the first of a series of notes which are intended to give students of the play an exact exposition of *Everyman's* Catholic theology. These notes will be in boldface, to distinguish them from the more general annotations.

The theological commentaries are based on an essential 1957 article written by Lawrence V. Ryan (1923-2019), Professor of English at Stanford University. All quotes in these notes are from Ryan.<sup>6</sup>

**Everyman is in trouble, so his natural instinct is to turn to external sources of pleasure and support to stay with him in his travails. He will learn, however, that any hope he places in "seeking help outside himself when faced with his greatest crisis" is misplaced. In fact, each of the three parties to whom Everyman appeals will prove to be quite dangerous to his soul, but in different ways. (Ryan, p. 726).<sup>6</sup>**

*Enter Fellowship.*

**Entering Character: Fellowship** represents companionship, but with the negative connotation of being a questionable character who engages in dubious behaviour.<sup>1</sup>

1 **Everyman.**  
2 Well met, good Fellowship, and good morrow.

= "good morning"; a traditional greeting.

4 **Fellowship.**  
Everyman, good morrow, by this day: –  
6 Sir, why lookest thou so piteously?  
If anything be amiss, I pray thee, me say,  
8 That I may help to remedy.

= a common oath.

= pitifully, wretchedly.<sup>1</sup>

= "tell me".

10 **Everyman.**  
Yea, good Fellowship, yea;  
12 I am in great jeopardy.

14 **Fellowship.**  
My true friend, shew to me your mind:  
16 I will not forsake thee, to my live's end,  
In the way of good company.

= reveal. = ie. "what is on your mind."

16-17: Fellowship pledges to remain by Everyman's side until he – Fellowship – dies.

18 **Everyman.**  
20 That was well spoken and lovingly.

22 **Fellowship.**  
Sir, I must needs know your heaviness:

= "the reason for your sorrow."

24 I have pity to see you in ony distress.  
 If ony have you wronged, ye shall revenged be,

26 Though I on the ground be slain for thee,  
 28 Though that I know before that I should die.

**Everyman.**  
 30 Verily, Fellowship, gramercy.

32 **Fellowship.**  
Tush! by thy thanks I set not a straw;

34 Shew me your grief, and say no more.

36 **Everyman.**  
 If I my heart should to you break,  
 38 And then you to turn your mind fro me,  
 And would not me comfort, when ye hear me speak,

40 Then should I ten times sorrier be.

42 **Fellowship.**  
 Sir, I say as I will do in deed.

44 **Everyman.**  
 46 Then be you a good friend at need;  
 I have found you true here-before.

48

**Fellowship.**  
 50 And so ye shall evermore;  
 For in faith, and thou go to hell,  
 52 I will not forsake thee by the way.

= any.  
 = ie. "anyone has wronged you".

26-27 Fellowship intensifies his promise: he will help Everyman, even if he were to know that it would cost him his own life to do so.  
**before** = ie. beforehand.

= "thank you"; from the Old French "grand merci".<sup>1</sup>

33: Everyman's gratitude is of no importance to Fellowship; Walker paraphrases, "there is no need to thank me" (p. 105).<sup>3</sup>

**Tush!** = common exclamation of impatience.<sup>1</sup>

**set not a straw** = consider worthless; a common expression.

**36ff (below):** Everyman is clearly anxious about whether he can count on Fellowship to help him, as he delays informing his friend of the favour he wants to ask of him; this forces Fellowship in turn to have to repeatedly urge Everyman to reveal to him the source of his distress.

= be revealed or opened.

= turn away from or abandon.

39: **when ye hear me speak** = ie. "when I tell you".

**break** (line 37) / **speak** = the words are spelled **breke** and **speke** in Britwell and Huth, and would have rhymed absolutely in Middle English: the sound of the first *e* would have been about halfway between the *a* of *bake* and the *ea* of *beak*, and the second *e* would have been sounded out as a distinct, unstressed syllable: "brai-ke" / "spai-ke".

= more grieved.<sup>1</sup>

= it was commonplace to praise another as *a friend at need* for being willing to help in times of trouble.

Lines 43 and 46 together seem to anticipate the familiar proverb "a friend in need is a friend indeed", but the more explicit connection between **in need** (or *at need*) and **in deed** (or *indeed*) does not appear until 1599's *Passionate Pilgrim* ("He that is thy friend indeed, / He will help thee in thy need." Source: OED). The common modern expression first appeared in print in 1659.

51-52: this is a powerful avowal of Fellowship's friendship; but does he really mean to keep this breezy promise to stay with Everyman, even if he is sent to hell?

**and** (line 51) = ie. even if.

54 **Everyman.**  
Ye speak like a good friend, I believe you well;  
56 I shall deserve it, and I may.

58 **Fellowship.**  
I speak of no deserving, by this day:  
60 For he that will say and nothing do,

Is not worthy with good company to go;  
62 Therefore shew me the grief of your mind,  
As to your friend most loving and kind.

64 **Everyman.**  
I shall shew you how it is:  
66 Comanded I am to go a journey,  
68 A long way, hard and dangerous,  
And give a strait count without delay

70 Before the High Judge Adonai;

Wherefore, I pray you, bear me company,  
72 As ye have promised in this journey.

74 **Fellowship.**  
That is matter indeed: promise is duty;

76 But, and I should take such a vyage on me,

I know it well, it should be to my pain;  
78 Also it make me afeared certain.  
But let us take counsel here as well as we can,  
80 For your words would fear a strong man.

82 **Everyman.**  
Why, ye said, if I had need,

84 Ye would me never forsake, quick ne dead,  
Though it were to hell truly.

86 **Fellowship.**  
88 So I said certainly;  
But such pleasures be set aside, the sooth to say,  
90 And also if we took such a journey,

56: *deserve* = repay; an obsolete meaning;<sup>1,4</sup> but Bruster assigns *deserve* its modern meaning of "be worthy of".  
*and I may* = "if I can."

= a common oath.

60: *say* = ie. say he will do something, hence "promise".  
*do* = would have been pronounced in Middle English to rhyme with line 61's *go*.

63: "as you would to your best friend."

= spelled with the *-ay* ending to rhyme with line 69's *delay*.

= strict or rigorous account.<sup>1</sup>

= title for God from the Hebrew scriptures; the OED writes, "The name *Adonai* was traditionally substituted by many Jewish people, in reading, for the sacred name of God denoted by the Tetragrammaton, YHWH...and is usually rendered as 'Lord' in English translations."

= ie. therefore. = beseech.

= spelled as shown to rhyme with *Adonai* (line 70).

75: *That is matter indeed* = "this is serious business."<sup>1</sup>  
*promise is duty* = Fellowship recognizes, at least for a moment, that his strongly-worded pledge to stick by Everyman should not be dispensed with lightly.

76: *and* = if.

*vyage* = ie. voyage; a common Middle English form, and the only variant appearing in this play. Pronounced *vee-yah-ge* (with a soft *g*).

= ie. for sure.

= afraid.

= consult, deliberate.<sup>1</sup>

= frighten.

83-84: *need* and *dead* would have rhymed, being pronounced *naid* and *daid*.

= "alive (*quick*) or dead".

85: Everyman alludes to Fellowship's guarantee at lines 51-52 above.

89: "but putting aside these pleasantries,<sup>8</sup> tell me frankly".

*sooth* = truth.

= ie. if.

92	When should we <u>come</u> again?	= return.
	<i>Everyman.</i>	Lester moves <b>come</b> to the end of the line (ie. " <i>When should we again come?</i> ") in order to make it rhyme with line 94 below. The pronunciation of <b>come</b> and <b>dome</b> would be <i>co-me / do-me</i> , the <b>o</b> sounding as in <i>home</i> .
94	Nay, never again till <u>the day of dome</u> .	= Doomsday, ie. Judgment Day, the end of the world.
	<i>Fellowship.</i>	
96	<u>In faith</u> , then will not I <u>come</u> there.	= truly. = go.
98	Who hath you <u>these tidings</u> brought?	= this news or announcement. <sup>1</sup>
	<i>Everyman.</i>	
100	Indeed, Death was with me here.	
	<i>Fellowship.</i>	
102	Now, by God <u>that all hath bought</u> ,	= "who redeemed all of humanity".
104	If Death were the messenger,	
106	For no man that is living to-day,	106-7: "then for no living man would I make that loathsome ( <b>loath</b> ) trip; note the lines' double negative.
108	I will not go that <u>loath</u> journey,	
	<i>Everyman.</i>	
110	Not for the <u>fadder</u> that begat me.	= ie. father; usually written as <i>fader</i> , but spelled <b>fadder</b> here to indicate the vowels should sound as in <i>father</i> . The form <i>father</i> did not become prevalent until the 1520's.
	<i>Everyman.</i>	
112	Ye promised otherwise, <u>pardie</u> .	= "by God"; a corruption of the French <i>par Dieu</i> .
	<i>Fellowship.</i>	
114	I <u>wot</u> well I say so truly:	114: "I well know ( <b>wot</b> ) I said that".
116	And yet, if thou wilt eat and drink, and make good cheer,	
	Or haunt to women the <u>lusty</u> company,	116: "or frequent the pleasant ( <b>lusty</b> ) company of women", <sup>1,4</sup> though <b>lusty</b> could carry its salacious meaning as well. <sup>8</sup>
		We may wish to note here in line 116 the first appearance of some dry humour in the play; such drollery will be primarily apparent in the characters of Fellowship, Kindred and Cousin.
		<b>It is through the humour, though, that the playwright is able to identify the specific danger that Fellowship presents to one's soul, to wit, that Fellowship leads one "into sins of the flesh" (Ryan, p. 726).<sup>6</sup></b>
118	I would not forsake you, <u>while the day is clear</u> ,	= literally, "as long as the day is bright", ie. "as long as the sun shines", an oath; <sup>1,3</sup> Lester paraphrases, "while things go well" (p. 75): <sup>7</sup> Fellowship's promise here is not as absolute as his previous vows had been.
	Trust me verily.	
	<i>Everyman.</i>	
120	Yea, <u>thereto</u> ye would be ready;	= for those things (sarcastic).
122	To <u>go to</u> mirth, <u>solace</u> and play,	= indulge in. <sup>8</sup> = pleasure, amusement. <sup>1</sup>
124	Your mind will sooner apply,	= ie. "you would rather devote yourself to these activities". <sup>1</sup>
126	Than to bear me company in my long journey.	
	<i>Fellowship.</i>	
128	Now, in good faith, I will not <u>that way</u> ;	= ie. go there.
	But, <u>and</u> thou will murder, or any man kill,	128: <b>and</b> = if.
130	In that I will help thee with a good will.	

<p>132 <i>Everyman.</i> Oh, that is a <u>simple advise</u> indeed. – <u>Gentle</u> fellow, help me in my necessity:</p> <p>134 We have <u>loved long</u>, and now I <u>need</u>. And now, gentle Fellowship, remember me.</p> <p>136 <i>Fellowship.</i> 138 <u>Whedder</u> ye have loved me or no, <u>By Saint John</u>, I will not with thee go.</p> <p>140 <i>Everyman.</i> 142 Yet, I pray thee, <u>take the labour</u>, and do so much for me, To <u>bring me forward</u>, for Saint Charity, 144 And comfort me, till I come <u>without</u> the town.</p> <p>146 <i>Fellowship.</i> Nay, <u>and</u> thou would give me a new <u>gown</u>,</p> <p>148 I will not a foot with thee go; But, <u>and thou had tarried</u>, I would not have left thee so. – 150 <u>And as now</u> God speed thee in thy journey! For from thee I will depart, as fast as I may.</p> <p>152 <i>Everyman.</i> 154 <u>Whedder</u> away, Fellowship? will thou forsake me?</p> <p>156 <i>Fellowship.</i> Yea, <u>by my fay</u>; to God I <u>betake</u> thee.</p> <p>158 <i>Everyman.</i> 160 Farewell, good Fellowship; for thee my heart is sore: <u>Adieu</u> forever, I shall see thee no more.</p> <p>162 <i>Fellowship.</i> 164 In faith, Everyman, farewell now at the <u>end</u>:</p> <p>166 For you I will remember that <u>parting is mourning</u>,</p> <p style="text-align: right;">[Exit Fellowship.]</p> <p>168 <i>Everyman.</i> 170 <u>Alack!</u> shall we thus <u>depart in deed</u>? – Ah, <u>Lady</u>, help! without <u>ony more comfort</u>, 172 <u>Lo</u>, Fellowship forsaketh me in my most need.</p>	<p>= foolish or stupid.<sup>1,2</sup> = ie. advice or view.<sup>1</sup> 133-5: with <i>gentle</i>, meaning "noble" or "gracious", Everyman tries to flatter Fellowship into assisting him, just as he did Death at Act I.206 above. = been friends a long time. = ie. need help.</p> <p>= ie. whether. = oaths to <i>Saint John</i> in this era could refer to either "<i>Saint John baptist</i>" or "<i>Saint John evangelist</i>".</p> <p>141-4: Everyman asks Fellowship to at least remain with him until they reach the city limits. = make the effort. = accompany me".<sup>7</sup> = outside.<sup>1</sup></p> <p>147: in the plays of the following centuries, we find characters frequently offering a gift of <i>a new gown</i> for women in return for favours. <i>and</i> = if. <i>gown</i> = a loose upper garment, used as everyday attire.<sup>1</sup></p> <p>= ie. "if you had decided to hang around here a bit longer". 150: <i>And as now</i> = so at this time.<sup>1</sup> <i>God speed thee</i> = ie. "may God give you success", a traditional formula of farewell expressed to one going on a trip.</p> <p>= "where are you going"; <i>Whedder</i> = whither.</p> <p>= "by my faith", a common oath. = entrust or commit.<sup>1</sup></p> <p>= Britwell prints <i>adieu</i> as <i>A dewe</i>, a common form.</p> <p>164: though both Britwell and Huth print <i>ende</i> here, Lester emends the line's last word to <i>ending</i> to achieve a semblance of a rhyme with line 165.</p> <p>= a precursor to Shakespeare's famous "<i>parting is such sweet sorrow</i>". <i>parting</i> = printed as <i>ptynge</i> in Britwell, but <i>partynge</i> in Huth.</p> <p>= same sense as <i>alas</i>. = part, separate.<sup>1</sup> = in fact, truly. = ie. the Virgin Mary. = "helping me any further". = behold.</p>
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For help in this world, whedder shall I resort?  
 174 Fellowship here before with me would merry make,  
 And now little sorrow for me doth he take.  
 176 It is said, "in prosperity men friends may find,  
Which in adversity be full unkind."  
 178 Now whedder for succour shall I flee,  
Sith that Fellowship hath forsaken me? –  
 180 To my kinsmen I will truly,  
Praying them to help me in my necessity;  
 182 I believe that they will do so,  
 For kind will creep, where it may not go.

184 I will go say, for yonder I see them go: –  
 Where be ye now, my friends and kinsmen?

186  
 188 *Enter Kindred and Cousin.*

**Kindred.**  
 190 Here be we now at your commandment:  
Cousin, I pray you, shew us your intent  
 192 In any wise, and not spare.

194 **Cousin.**  
 Yea, Everyman, and to us declare  
 196 If ye be disposed to go ony whidder;  
 For, weet you well, [we] will live and die togidder.  
 198

**Kindred.**

= "to where shall I turn?"  
 = "who was here a moment ago". = prefer to have fun.  
 175: Fellowship feels little sympathy for Everyman.  
 176-7: a proverbial sentiment: friends are easy to find when  
 times are good, but they disappear when the going gets  
 tough.  
**Which** = who.  
 = ie. whither, to where. = help.  
 = since, because.<sup>1</sup>  
 = ie. "I will confidently turn".  
 = pleading with.  
 183: proverbial: relatives (**kind**) will crawl (**creep**) where  
 they cannot walk (**go**),<sup>4</sup> ie. you can count on your kin to help  
 in even the most trying circumstances, when no one else will  
 do so. Cawley paraphrases this with the well-known expres-  
 sion, "blood is thicker than water".

= "assay", "try them",<sup>4</sup> or "test out that adage."<sup>3</sup>  
 184-5: Lester deletes line 184's final word (**go**) to tease out a  
 rhyme with line 185, while the anonymous editor of a 1907  
 edition of the play tags on a "**Lo?**" at the end of line 185 so  
 as to make it rhyme with line 184.

**Entering Characters:** Everyman now turns for help to  
 a second external source of joy and support, his relatives  
**Kindred** and **Cousin**.  
 The collocation of **cousin(s)** and **kindred** appeared fre-  
 quently in early printed English literature.

**Everyman's faith in his relations is more perilous  
 to his soul than it was in Fellowship, because he is mis-  
 placing "his trust in in the love and loyalty of his family  
 at a time when he should look to God alone for love and  
 support."** (Ryan, p. 726).<sup>6</sup>

= "at your service."  
 191: **Cousin** = term used to refer to kin generally.  
**shew us your intent** = "tell us what you want".  
 192: **In any wise** = "in any manner",<sup>1</sup> or "at any rate".<sup>4</sup>  
**not spare** = leave nothing out.

= anywhere.  
 = "well you know". = printed in Huth. = ie. together.

**200-201 (below):** Britwell accidentally switched the last  
 word of these two lines (ie. **bold** was printed as the last word  
 of line 200, and **hold** at the end of line 201); we have  
 emended the error, since the lines do not make sense as  
 printed. Huth and BL have the words in their correct  
 locations.

200	In <u>wealth and woe</u> we will <u>with you hold</u> ,	200: note the line's prolonged alliteration. <i>wealth and woe</i> = in good times and bad; a common collocation. <i>with you hold</i> = "stick by your side." <sup>1</sup>
	For over his kin a man may be <u>bold</u> .	201: a man may take liberties with or ask difficult favours of his relations. <sup>1</sup>
202	<i>Everyman.</i>	= noble, gracious. <sup>1</sup>
204	Gramercy, my friends and kinsmen <u>kind</u> ; Now shall I shew you the grief of my mind:	= ie. Death.
206	I was commanded by a <u>messenger</u> ,	= ie. God's. We note that the articles <i>a</i> and <i>an</i> were both used to precede words which began with the letter <i>h</i> throughout the early printing era.
	That is <u>an high king's</u> chief officer;	208: <i>bad</i> = bade, ie. commanded, instructed. <i>pain</i> = word used to describe a project which entails great effort and hardship. <sup>1</sup>
208	He <u>bad</u> me go on pilgrimage to my <u>pain</u> ,	= return. = ie. rigorous reckoning. = ie. Satan. <sup>4</sup> = "is watching me". <sup>1,4</sup>
	But I know well I shall never <u>come</u> again.	212: ie. "who intends to impede my journey," <sup>1</sup> or "is on the lookout for me" (Lester, p. 78). <sup>7</sup> Walker glosses lines 211-2 to mean that Satan is lying "in wait" for Everyman, intending to "ambush" him (p. 107). <sup>3</sup>
210	Also I must give a <u>reckoning strait</u> , For I have a <u>great enemy</u> that <u>hath me in wait</u> ,	= deeds in life.
212	Which intendeth me for to hinder.	= blameworthy or sinful. <sup>1,3</sup> = done, committed. = another allusion to life as a temporary gift from God. <i>sith</i> = since.
214	<i>Kindred.</i>	= rejected, ie. not followed. = ie. thither, to there.
216	What account is that which ye must render? That would I know.	= subject, state of things. <sup>1</sup> = would rather fast on.
218	<i>Everyman.</i>	230: ie. for five years or longer.
220	Of all my <u>works</u> I must shew, How I have lived, and my days spent;	= born. <sup>1</sup>
222	Also of <u>ill</u> deeds that I have <u>used</u> In my time, <u>sith life was me lent</u> ,	238: the line may be interpreted in either of two ways: (1) Kindred tries to buck up Everyman, telling him to return to his natural good-nature; or (2) Kindred is responding with
224	And of all virtues that I have <u>refused</u> : Therefore, I pray you, go <u>thidder</u> with me To help to make mine account, for Saint Charity.	
226	<i>Cousin.</i>	
228	What, to go thidder? Is that the <u>matter</u> ? Nay, Everyman, I <u>had liever fast</u> bread and water All this five year and more.	
232	<i>Everyman.</i>	
234	Alas, that ever I was <u>bore</u> ! For now shall I never be merry, If that you forsake me.	
236	<i>Kindred.</i>	
238	Ah, sir! what, ye <u>be</u> a merry man!	

Take good heart to you, and make no moan.

240 But one thing I warn you, by Saint Anne,  
242 As for me ye shall go alone.

**Everyman.**

244 My cousin, will you not with me go?

246 **Cousin.**

No, by our lady, I have the cramp in my toe:

248 Trust not to me, for, so God me speed,  
250 I will deceive you in your most need.

**Kindred.**

252 It availeth not us to tice:

Ye shall have my maid with all my hert:

254 She loveth to go to feasts, there to be nice,  
And to dance, and abroad to stert;

256 I will give her leave to help you in that journey,  
258 If that you and she may agree.

**Everyman.**

260 Now shew me the very effect of your mind:  
262 Will you go with me, or abide behind?

**Kindred.**

264 Abide behind! yea, that will I, and I may;  
266 Therefore farewell till another day.

[Exit Kindred.]

**Everyman.**

270 How should I be merry or glad?  
272 For fair promises men to me make,  
274 But, when I have most need, they me forsake;  
I am deceived, that maketh me sad.

**Cousin.**

276 Cousin Everyman, farewell now,

light irony to Everyman's last speech.

*be* = are.

239: **Take good heart to you** = "summon your courage",  
ie. "buck up": see OED, *heart*, *n.*, phrases P3.k.

**moan** = lamentation.

= a common oath, with allusion to the mother of the Virgin  
Mary.<sup>7</sup>

247: the best of what Ryan calls "lame excuses" given by  
Everyman's kin to avoid traveling with him (p. 726).<sup>6</sup>

**by our lady** = a common oath for many centuries; a  
reference to the Virgin Mary.

= "God help me",<sup>1,7</sup> or "God bless me".<sup>3</sup>

= betray, disappoint.<sup>1</sup> = greatest.

252: "it is fruitless for you to try to entice us to go with you."

**253-257 (below):** Kindred thinks his merry-making house-  
servant may be willing to go along with Everyman.

= ie. heart; **heart** appears as *herte* throughout the editions,  
but we only print it here so in order to provide a rhyme  
with *stert* at the end of line 255.

= wanton<sup>4</sup> or "finely attired".<sup>8</sup>

= Cawley suggests, "to gad about" (p. 217).<sup>4</sup>

**stert** = ie. start; *stert* / *sterte* was the preferred form  
until the mid-16th century.

= permission.

= "exactly what you intend to do."<sup>2</sup>

= remain.<sup>1</sup>

= if.

278 For verily I will not go with you;  
Also of mine own [life] an unready reckoning  
I have to account, therefore I make tarrying;

280 Now God keep thee, for now I go.

282 [Exit Cousin.]

284 **Everyman.**

Ah, Jesus, is all come hereto?

286 Lo, fair words maketh fools fain;

They promise, and nothing will do certayne.

288 My kinsmen promised me faithfully

For to abide with me steadfastly;

290 And now fast away do they flee.

Even so Fellowship promised me.

292 What friend were best me of to provide?

I lose my time here longer to abide; –

294 Yet in my mind a thing there is:

All my life I have loved riches;

296 If that my Good now help me might,

It would make my heart full light.

298 I will speak to him in this distress: –

Where art thou, my Goods and Riches?

300

[Goods speaks from a corner.]

302

**Goods.**

304 Who calleth me? Everyman? what, hast thou haste?

278-9: Cousin acknowledges that, his own life having been unwisely spent, he must remain behind (*make tarrying*) in order mend his ways before it is his turn to meet God.

We note that Britwell and Huth omit *life* in line 278, but BL includes it.

= "God protect or preserve you",<sup>1</sup> a common expression.

= "has it all come to this?"

286: *Lo* = "look", an attention grabber.

*fair words...fain* = "fine-sounding speeches satisfy fools;" proverbial, also appearing as "*fair promises make fools fain*."

*fain* = glad, content.<sup>1</sup>

= "but will do nothing definite" (Fitzgerald, p. 384),<sup>9</sup> ie. "but cannot be counted on."

*certayne* = spelled so in the quartos to indicate a rhyme with line 286's *fain* (spelled *fayne* and *certayne* respectively, both pronounced with the extra inflected *e* at the end; *fay-ne* / *cer-tay-ne*).

= to remain.

= similarly.

= "to find for myself?"

293: "I am wasting valuable time remaining here."

**294-297 (below):** Everyman has an idea: he may find a willing companion in Goods, ie. his wealth and possessions, which have ever given him great happiness.

= ie. Goods, Everyman's money and material wealth. We note that Walker emends *Good* in his text to *Goods* throughout his edition of the play, even though, as Bruster points out, *good* as a singular form for *goods* was common in this period.

= very glad.<sup>3</sup>

296-7: the lines' last words, spelled *myght* and *lyght* in the quartos, would have been pronounced with a long *e* and a guttural *gh* sound: *meekht* / *leekht*.

= a common collocation.

301: Goods may be lying on the stage floor from the beginning of the play, surrounded by bags and chests of money.

= "are you in a hurry?"

306 I lie here in corners trussed and piled so high,  
And in chests I am locked so fast,  
Also sacked in bags, thou mayst see with thine eye,  
308 I cannot steer; in packs low I lie!

310 What would ye have, lightly me say.

310 **Everyman.**

312 Come hiddere, Good, in all the haste thou may;  
For of counsel I must desire thee.

314 [Goods comes forward.]  
316

316 **Goods.**

318 Sir, and ye in the world have sorrow or adversity,  
That can I help you to remedy shortly.

320

320 **Everyman.**

322 It is another disease that grieveth me,  
324 In this world it is not: I tell thee so,  
I am sent for another way to go,  
To give a strait account general

326 Before the highest Jupiter of all:

328 And all my life I have had my pleasure in thee,  
Therefore I pray thee now go with me;  
For, peraventure, thou mayst before God Almighty  
330 My reckoning help to clean and purify:  
For it is said ever among,

332 That money maketh all right that is wrong.

334 **Goods.**

Nay, Everyman, I sing another song:

336 I follow no man in such vyages,

For, and I went with thee,

338 Thou shoulds fare much the worse for me:

= packed, bundled.<sup>1</sup>

= securely.

308: ***I cannot steer*** = ie. "that I cannot stir", ie. move.

***steer*** = spelled as shown to reflect Middle English pronunciation (*steer-e*); appears as ***styre*** in Britwell and ***stere*** (both common spellings) in Huth and BL.

***in packs...lie*** = "I am bundled in packs here on the ground!"

309: "what do you want? tell me quickly (***lightly***)."<sup>4</sup>

= ie. hither, here. = "as speedily as you can."

313: "because I need your advice."

315: stage direction from Lester.

318-9: Goods intimates that any material problem on Everyman's plate can be solved by him, ie. cash.

***and*** = if.

***shortly*** = speedily.<sup>1</sup>

322-3: Everyman's problem (his ***disease***)<sup>4</sup> is not a material one (ie. it is not ***in this world***), but rather a spiritual one.

= comprehensive (***general***)<sup>2</sup> and rigorous account.

= "principle deity", ie. God, or perhaps simply "God"; we note that the OED includes no definition for ***Jupiter*** to refer either to a generic deity or the Christian God.

= "taken pleasure in you, my wealth".

= perhaps.

331: "for it is commonly said" (Cawley, p. 218).<sup>4</sup>

Note the rhyming triplet of lines 331, 332 and 335.

332: that money can fix any problem.

= metaphorically, "have an opposing viewpoint;" a common expression.

= ie. voyages, journeys.

**337-342 (below)**: Everyman gets his first key lesson of the play: by making the acquisition of money the focus of his life – when he should have been spreading his largesse amongst the poor – he has harmed the record of his life, which will make his reckoning before God more difficult.

= if.

338: Goods admits that his presence with Everyman before God can only hurt his case!

***shoulds*** = would.

***for*** = because of.

340 For because on me thou did set thy mind,  
Thy reckoning I have made blotted and blind,  
That thine account thou cannot make truly,  
342 And that hast thou for the love of me.

344 *Everyman.*  
That would grieve me full sore,  
346 When I should come to that fearful answer: –  
Up, let us go thither togidder.

348 *Goods.*  
350 Nay, not so: I am too brittle, I may not endure;  
I will follow [no] man one foot, be ye sure.

352 *Everyman.*  
354 Alas! I have thee loved, and had great pleasure  
All my life-days on good and treasure.

356 *Goods.*  
358 That is to thy dampnation without lesing,

For my love is contrary to the love everlasting;  
360 But if thou had me loved moderately during,  
As to the poor give part of me,  
362 Then shouldest thou not in this dolour be,  
Nor in this great sorrow and care.

364 *Everyman.*  
366 Lo, now was I deceived, or I was ware,

368 And all I may weet spending of time.

*Goods.*  
370 What, weenest thou that I am thine?

**339-342 (below):** a difficult image: because Everyman's life was focused on increasing his wealth, his Goods have caused his book of account or good deeds to be illegible.

= smeared and made obscure,<sup>4,8</sup> so as to be illegible.<sup>3</sup>  
= the sense is "make out", ie. "clearly read" (Walker, p. 108).<sup>3</sup>  
= "because of your".

**The love of one's possessions is the most hazardous misplacement of one's affections of all: as Ryan writes, "Excessive love of worldly goods closes the soul to love of any higher object." He contrasts love of wealth with excessive love for and dependence on one's fellow humans, which, though threatening to the soul's well-being, are at least "not incompatible with love of God." Love of wealth, on the other hand, can be an actual positive hindrance to one's proper relationship with God. (Ryan, p. 726).<sup>6</sup>**

= ie. sorely.  
= "that scary moment when I must answer to God".<sup>1</sup>  
= ie. "get up!"<sup>8</sup> = ie. together.

= frail, feeble.<sup>1</sup>  
= *no* is omitted in Britwell, but included in Huth and BL.

= ie. "all the days of my life".<sup>1</sup>

358: *dampnation* = ie. damnation; the preferred form until the mid-16th century.  
*without lesing* = without lie or falsehood,<sup>17</sup> ie. truly.

359: "for love of me (ie. money) is the antithesis of love of God."  
= without excess. = ie. "during your life".<sup>4</sup>

362: "then you would not be experiencing this grief or distress (*dolour*)".<sup>1</sup>  
= trouble.<sup>1</sup>

= "before (*or* for *ere*) I was aware of (ie. realized) it"<sup>1</sup>

367: "and I can blame it all on (*weet*) my squandering (*spending*) of my time."<sup>4</sup>  
*weet* = the proper spelling is *wite*, but is spelled as shown to reflect its Middle English pronunciation. The editions employ *wete* and *wyte*.

= "do you imagine or believe". = "belong to you".

372	<b>Everyman.</b> I had <u>went</u> so.	= assumed, supposed; both <b>went</b> and <b>wend</b> (line 385 below) were used as the past participle form of <i>to ween</i> .
374	<b>Goods.</b>	
376	Nay, Everyman, I say no: As for a while I was lent thee;	= for a while.
378	<u>A season</u> thou hast had me in prosperity.	
	My <u>condition</u> is man's soul to kill: If I save one, a thousand I do <u>spill</u> .	379-380: wealth and fortune are more likely to ruin ( <i>spill</i> ) <sup>17</sup> a man's soul than to save it. <b>condition</b> = nature. <sup>1</sup>
	<u>Weenest thou</u> that I will follow thee? Nay, <u>fro</u> this world not, verily.	381-2: no man can bring his valuables with him from this world to the next. <b>Weenest thou</b> = "do you imagine". <b>fro</b> = from.
384	<b>Everyman.</b> I had <u>wend</u> otherwise.	= thought.
386		
	<b>Goods.</b> Therefore to thy soul Good is a thief, For when thou art dead, this is my <u>guise</u> , Another to deceive in the same <u>wise</u> , As I have <u>done</u> thee, and all to <u>his soul's reprove</u> .	387-391 (below): a man's wealth is passed from one man to another, never held by any individual permanently; Goods resurrects Death's admonition of Act I.195-8 above.  = custom, manner. <sup>17</sup> = way, manner.  391: <b>done</b> = ie. done to. <b>his soul's</b> = the next man's soul's. <b>reprove</b> = shame, disgrace; <sup>1</sup> the Middle English form of <i>reproof</i> ; also commonly spelled <i>repreef</i> .
388		
390		
392		
	<b>Everyman.</b> O false Good, cursed thou be: Thou traitor to God, thou hast deceived me, And <u>caugh[t]</u> me in thy snare.	= the <i>t</i> in <i>caught</i> is missing in Britwell.
394		
396		
398	<b>Goods.</b> <u>Marry, thou brought thyself in care</u> ,	399: <b>Marry</b> = a common oath, derived from the Virgin Mary. <b>thou brought...care</b> = "you brought on your own grief or trouble." <sup>1,9</sup>
	Whereof I am right glad: I must needs laugh, I cannot be sad.	400-1: Goods has no sympathy for Everyman!
400		
402		
	<b>Everyman.</b> Ah, Good, thou hast had long my <u>heartily</u> love; I gave thee that which should be the Lord's above. But wilt thou not go with me indeed? I pray thee truth to say.	= heartfelt, sincere. <sup>1</sup> 405: Everyman becomes increasingly aware of the error of his ways.
404		
406		
408		
	<b>Goods.</b> No, so <u>God me speed</u> ;	= God help me.
410		
	Therefore farewell, and <u>have good day</u> .	411: for Everyman, Goods' breezy parting here must be par-

412

[Exit Goods.]

414

**Everyman.**

416

O, to whom shall I make my moan,  
For to go with me in that heavy journey?

418

First Fellowship he said he would with me gone;  
His words were very pleasant and gay,  
420 But afterward he left me alone.

422

Then spake I to my kinsmen all in despair,  
And also they gave me words fair,  
They lacked no fair speaking;

424

But all forsake me in the ending.  
Then went I to my Goods that I loved best,

426

In hope to have found comfort, but there had I least:

428

For my Goods sharply did me tell,  
That he bringeth many into hell.  
Then of myself I was ashamed,

430

And so I am worthy to be blamed:  
Thus may I well myself hate.

432

Of whom shall I now counsel take?

434

I think that I shall never speed,  
Till that I go to my Good Deed;  
But, alas! she is so weak,

436

That she can nother go nor speak:

Yet will I venter on her now. —

END of ACT II.

ticularly painful, given his predicament.

**have good day** = a surprisingly common expression, and one which appears frequently in Chaucer's works. Note, though, that "have a good day" does not appear at all in 15th-17th century literature.

= "make my request", a common expression.  
= weighty, grave, profound.<sup>1</sup>

416-420: **moan** (line 415), **gone** (line 417) and **alone** (line 420) appear as *mone*, *gone* and *alone* in the quartos, indicating a perfect disyllabic triple rhyme: *moh-ne / goh-ne / a-loh-ne*.

423: ie. they told Everyman everything to appease him.

425-6: the quartos spell the rhyming words **best** and **least** as *best* and *leest* respectively, the pronunciation of *e* here like *a* in *hate*. The double *ee* indicates a slightly longer sound than a single *e* alone.

= sternly.<sup>1</sup>

432: "with whom shall I deliberate or consult now?"<sup>1</sup> The imbedded expression is *to take counsel of*.  
= succeed.

436: **nother** = neither; but the two words have distinct etymologies, and so appear as separate entries in the OED.

**go** = walk, move.<sup>1,8</sup>

= "dare approach" or "make *trial of*";<sup>1</sup> **venter** is the Middle English form of *venture*.



### ACT III.

Everyman is joined by Good Deeds, and,  
with the help of Knowledge, receives God's Grace.

1 *Everyman.*  
2 My Good Deeds, where be you?  
4 [Good Deeds speaks from the ground.]  
6 *Good Deeds.*  
7 Here I lie cold in the ground;  
8 Thy sins have me so sore bound,  
9 That I cannot stere.  
10  
11 *Everyman.*  
12 O Good Deeds, I stand in fear;  
13 I must you pray of counsel,  
14 For help now should come right well.  
16 *Good Deeds.*  
17 Everyman, I have understanding  
18 That ye be summoned account to make  
19 Before Messias of Jerusalem King:  
20  
21 And you do by me, that journey with you will I take.  
22 *Everyman.*  
23 Therefore I come to you my moan to make:  
24 I pray you, that ye will go with me.  
26 *Good Deeds.*  
27 I would full fain, but I cannot stand verily.  
28  
29 *Everyman.*  
30 Why, is there onything on you fall?  
32 *Good Deeds.*  
33 Yea, sir, I may thank you of all:  
34 If ye had parfitly cheered me,

Everyman turns now to his Good Deeds to help him on his journey. Unfortunately, because Everyman has failed to give alms and support the poor – ie. perform good deeds – throughout his life, Good Deeds is of no use to him when he comes to settle his account before God. If Everyman wants Good Deeds' assistance, he must first receive God's grace.

**New Character:** as Everyman indicated in the last lines of Act II, *Good Deeds* is female. Good Deeds begins her part lying prone on the ground, weakened by Everyman's failures of character.

= ie. on.

= sorely, ie. vigorously, severely.<sup>1</sup>

= ie. stir, a Middle English form.

= spelled *ferē* in the editions, which rhymes absolutely with *stere* of line 9; pronounced as *stair-e* / *fair-e*.

= "ask you for advice".

= would be quite welcome.

= ie. know.

= the Messiah, ie. Jesus; the general Old and Middle English spelling of *Messiah*, and the one that appears in the editions, was *Myssyas*, pronounced *Mee-see-as*. The spelling *Messias*, which was common in the late 15th and early 16th century, is the one generally adopted by the editors. The modern familiar form *Messiah* became popular after the mid-16th century.

= "if you take my advice"<sup>1</sup> or "if you do as I suggest".<sup>4</sup>

= to lament or entreat; the expression *to make one's moan* could have either of these meanings.<sup>1</sup>

= very well like to. = ie. stand up.

30: "why, has anything happened to you?"

*fall* = befallen.<sup>4</sup>

33: "yes, and I have you to thank above all else (*of all*)!"<sup>3</sup>

34-35: if Everyman had dedicated his life to serving Good

<p>Your book of count full ready <u>had be</u>. –</p> <p>36 Look, the books of your works and deeds <u>eke</u></p> <p>As how they lie <u>under the feet</u>,</p> <p>38 To your soul's <u>heaviness</u>.</p> <p>40 [Everyman tries to read book of deeds.]</p> <p>42 <b>Everyman.</b> Our Lord Jesus help me, 44 For one letter herein can I not see.</p> <p>46 <b>Good Deeds.</b> There is a <u>blind</u> reckoning in time of distress!</p> <p>48</p> <p><b>Everyman.</b> 50 Good Deeds, I pray you, help me in this need, Or else I am for ever <u>dampnèd</u> indeed! 52 Therefore help me to make reckoning Before the Redeemer of all thing, 54 That king <u>is</u>, and was, and ever <u>shall</u>.</p> <p>56 <b>Good Deeds.</b> Everyman, I am sorry of your <u>fall</u>,</p> <p>58 And <u>fain</u> would I help you, <u>and</u> I were able.</p> <p>60 <b>Everyman.</b> Good Deeds, your counsel, I pray you, give me.</p> <p>62 <b>Good Deeds.</b> 64 That shall I do verily, Though that on my feet I <u>may not</u> go: 66 I have a sister that shall <u>with</u> you also, Called Knowledge, which shall with you <u>abide</u>,</p>	<p>Deeds (ie. performing good deeds), then he would be well-prepared to face God. <i>parfitly cheered me</i> = comforted or encouraged Good Deeds to the greatest extent possible,<sup>1,4</sup> ie. treated him well.<sup>3</sup> <i>parfitly</i> = <i>parfit</i> was the more common form of <i>perfect</i>, the <i>c</i> not becoming common until the early 16th century; the <i>c</i>-less form persisted through the Elizabethan era, appearing regularly in plays of that later period. <i>had be</i> = would be.</p> <p><b>36-38 (below):</b> Good Deeds points to Everyman's book of accounts lying on the ground.<sup>8</sup></p> <p>= also.</p> <p>37-38: a metaphor for how the way Everyman lived his life weighs heavily on his soul. <i>under the feet</i> = Bruster suggests that the pages of Everyman's book of account lie strewn on the floor. <i>heaviness</i> = Lester suggests "grief".</p> <p>40: stage direction from Walker.</p> <p>44: Everyman examines his book of good works, only to find it empty, or at least too blurry to read.</p> <p>47: Cawley glosses, "a sinful person in his hour of need finds that the account of his good deeds is dimly written and difficult to read" (p. 221).<sup>4</sup> <i>There</i> = generally emended to <i>Here</i> (which appears in Huth and RP) by the editors. <i>blind</i> = alludes back to line 44's "can I not see".</p> <p>= ie. damned.</p> <p>= ie. "who is". = ie. shall be.</p> <p>= ruin,<sup>8</sup> but also with a nod to Everyman's descent into a sinful life; the allusion is to the <i>fall</i> of Adam, who, by eating of the forbidden fruit with his mate Eve, saw his life change from one of eternal paradise to one that was finite and wearily burdensome.</p> <p>= gladly. = if.</p> <p>= cannot. = ie. go with. = remain.</p>
---	---

68	To help you to make that <u>dreadful</u> reckoning.	= formidable. <sup>1</sup>
70	[ <i>Enter Knowledge.</i> ]	<b>Entering Character: Knowledge</b> in the play represents "knowledge of one's sins and the proper method to shrift" (Thomas, p. 13); <sup>12</sup> <i>shrift</i> = confess. Knowledge may also be a female character, as Good Deeds has referred to Knowledge as her <i>sister</i> at line 66 above. On the other hand, Knowledge is referred to as <i>he</i> in all the editions at line 82 below.
72	<b>Knowledge.</b>	
	Everyman, I will go with thee, and be thy guide,	
74	In thy <u>most</u> need to go by thy side.	= greatest.
76	<b>Everyman.</b>	
	In good condition I am now in every thing,	
78	And am <u>whole</u> content with this good thing:	= fully; <sup>1</sup> Britwell prints <i>hole</i> (= whole), but the editors generally emend <i>whole</i> to <i>wholly</i> , which is the form appearing in the other editions (spelled <i>holy</i> in both).
	Thanked be God my <u>Creator</u> .	= spelled <i>creature</i> in all the editions; <i>creature</i> was an alternate Middle English spelling of both <i>creator</i> and <i>creature</i> , pronounced <i>crai-toor-e</i> .
80	<b>Good Deeds.</b>	
		<b>82-87 (below):</b> a subtle point: there is a place to which Knowledge must first take Everyman where he must obtain God's grace, before he can make the pilgrimage to see God.
82	And when <u>he</u> hath brought you <u>there</u>	82: <i>he</i> = ie. Knowledge; the editors generally emend this to <i>she</i> . <i>there</i> = ie. to that place.
	Where thou shalt heal thee of thy <u>smart</u> ,	83: where Everyman will be relieved of his pain and suffering ( <i>smart</i> ). <sup>1</sup>
84	Then go you with your reckoning and your good deeds togidder,	84: a bit of foreshadowing: when he is finally prepared to meet his maker, Everyman can expect to be accompanied only by Good Deeds; this point, however, completely evades Everyman, who will continue to be disappointed when his other companions abandon him.
	For to make thee joyful at the heart	
86	Before the blessed <u>Trinity</u> .	= ie. the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.
		<b>Good deeds are necessary to gain salvation from God, but are not enough by themselves to obtain it: a person must first achieve a state of grace before his good deeds can help him.</b> So how can a man acquire this grace? the answer is, he must undergo the sacrament of penance, which is comprised of three distinct parts: (1) <i>contrition</i> – genuine regret for sins committed. (2) <i>confession</i> – which to be fully effective, must be offered to a priest. (3) <i>satisfaction</i> – he must undergo some punishment to purify the body and soul from sin.
88	<b>Everyman.</b>	
	My Good Deeds, <u>gramercy</u> :	
90	I am well content certainly	
	With your words sweet.	= "I thank you."

92	<b>Knowledge.</b>	
94	Now go we togidder lovingly	
96	To Confession, that cleansing river.	
	<b>Everyman.</b>	
98	For joy I weep: I <u>would</u> we there were;	98: wish; note the line's alliteration.
100	But I pray you, give me <u>cognition</u> : Where dwelleth that holy man Confession?	99: "but I beseech you, give me knowledge ( <i>cognition</i> )", <sup>9</sup> ie. "instruct me". In Huth, the line reads, " <i>But I pray you to instruct me by intellection</i> ", ie. an exercise of the intellect. <sup>1</sup>
102	<b>Knowledge.</b>	
104	In the <u>house of salvation</u> ;	
106	We shall find him in that place, That shall us comfort by God's grace. –	= place where the soul can be saved, which Cawley identifies as the church.
108	[ <i>Confession enters</i> ; <i>Knowledge takes Everyman to Confession.</i> ]	
110	<u>Lo</u> , this is Confession: kneel down, and ask mercy;	= behold.
112	For he is in good <u>conceit</u> with God Almighty.	= favour or esteem. <sup>1</sup>
	<b>Everyman.</b> [ <i>To Confession</i> ]	
114	O glorious fountain that all uncleanness doth <u>clarify</u> ,	114-5: note Everyman's watery metaphor, with <i>fountain</i> , <i>uncleanliness</i> , and <i>Wash</i> . = purify. <sup>1</sup>
116	Wash fro me the <u>spots of vice unclean</u> ,	= stain. = sinful, morally corrupt. <sup>1</sup>
118	That on me no sin may be seen; I come with Knowledge for my <u>redemption</u> ,	= salvation, ie. deliverance from sin and damnation. <sup>1</sup>
120	<u>Redempt</u> with heart and full <u>contrition</u> ,	118: redeemed with heartfelt and complete contrition. <i>Redempt</i> = redeemed; an obsolete word. <sup>1</sup> <i>contrition</i> = penitence, a feeling of regret for sins committed. <sup>1</sup>
122	For I am commanded a pilgrimage to take, And great accounts before God to make. Now I pray you, <u>Shrift</u> , <u>moder of salvation</u> ,	121: <i>Shrift</i> = personified confession; an alternate term. <i>moder of salvation</i> = ie. mother of salvation, a metaphor for confession as a necessary act to be saved; <i>moder</i> was the dominant Middle English form, though Huth and BL both print <i>mother</i> here. Lester notes that the use of <i>mother</i> here is figurative, since Confession is clearly a male character.
124	<u>Help my Good Deeds for</u> my <u>piteous exclamation</u> .	122: <i>Help my Good Deeds</i> = ie. help Good Deeds to stand and walk, so she in turn can help Everyman. <i>for</i> = in response to. <i>piteous</i> = deserving pity or mercy. <i>exclamation</i> = a vehement act of crying out in pain. <sup>1</sup>
124	<b>Confession.</b> I know your sorrow well, Everyman:	

126	Because with Knowledge ye come to me, I will you comfort as well as I can;	126-7: Confession is only willing to help Everyman because he is accompanied by Knowledge (which signifies that Everyman has acknowledged his sin) and is genuinely contrite.  = acts performed to redeem sin. = expeller, remover. <sup>1,4</sup> We note that the middle of the line appears in Britwell as " <i>penaunce voyce voyder</i> ", but the other editions do not repeat the error.
128	And a precious jewel I will give thee, Called <i>penance</i> , <i>voider</i> of adversity:	
130	Therewith shall your body chastised be With <i>abstinence</i> and perseverance in God's service;	130-1: Everyman's body and soul will be mended through the performance of acts of penance, ie. acts of self-mortification and fidelity ( <i>perseverance</i> ) in serving God. <i>abstinence</i> = self-restraint, asceticism. <sup>1</sup>
132	Here shall you receive <i>that scourge of me</i> ,	132: Confession will provide Everyman with a literal whip ( <i>scourge</i> ), with which he will flog himself as an act of penance. <i>of</i> = from.
134	[ <i>Confession shows scourge.</i> ]	134: stage direction from Lester.
136	Which is penance <i>strong</i> that ye must endure. Remember thy Saviour was <i>scourged</i> for thee	= severe. = literally whipped; multiple books of the New Testament attest to the flogging Jesus received from the Romans before he was crucified. = smart or painful lashes; a common collocation.
138	With <i>sharp scourges</i> , and suffered it patiently:  So must thou, <i>or</i> thou <i>scape</i> that painful pilgrimage. –	139: so must Everyman endure a lashing from the <i>scourge of penance</i> (line 148 below) before ( <i>or</i> for "ere") he can escape ( <i>scape</i> ) an undesirable journey to hell. The language of BL for this line may be preferred: " <i>So must thou, or thou pass thy pilgrimage</i> ", meaning that Everyman must complete his penance before he may commence his journey, if he wishes fo God to save him.
140	Knowledge, <i>keep him in</i> this vyage,	= "protect Everyman throughout". The words <i>pilgrimage</i> (line 139) and <i>vyage</i> would have rhymed nicely in Middle English: <i>peel-gree-mah-ge</i> / <i>vee-ah-ge</i> (both pronounced with a soft <i>g</i> ).
142	And by that time Good Deeds will be with thee; –  [ <i>Confession gives scourge to Knowledge.</i> ]	141: a promise that Everyman will receive the assistance of Good Deeds, who will be portrayed as regaining her physical strength through Everyman's redemption.
144	[ <i>To Everyman</i> ] But <i>in anywise</i> be <i>sicker</i> of mercy,	145: <i>in anywise</i> = in any case. <i>sicker</i> = sure, certain; <sup>1,7</sup> <i>sicker</i> is an etymon of (ie. it is derived from the same word as) <i>secure</i> . Britwell prints <i>seker</i> , which could perhaps be interpreted to mean "seeker", but Huth substitutes <i>sure</i> for <i>seker</i> , clarifying the intended meaning. Bruster, we note, insists <i>seker</i> should be glossed to mean "seeker".
146	For your time <i>draweth fast</i> ; <i>and ye will saved be</i> ,	= approaches quickly. = "if you wish to be saved".
148	Ask God mercy, and he will grant truly: When with the scourge of penance man doth <i>him bind</i> ,	148: likely meaning, "when man commits himself to acts of penance". A 1493 work describes a prelate as one who, in a

150 The oil of forgiveness then shall he find.

**Everyman.**

152 Thanked be God for his gracious work,  
154 For now I will my penance begin:  
154 This hath rejoiced and lighted my heart,

156 Though the knots be painful and hard within.

**Knowledge.**

158 Everyman, look your penance that ye fulfil,  
158 What pain that ever it to you be;  
160 And Knowledge shall give you counsel at will,  
162 How your account ye shall make clearly.

**Everyman.**

164 O eternal God, O heavenly figure,  
164 O way of rightwiseness, O goodly vision,  
166 Which descended down in a virgin pure,  
166 Because he would Everyman redeem,

168 Which Adam forfeited by his disobedience,

O blessed Godhead, elect and high Divine,

170 Forgive me my grievous offence;  
170 Here I cry thee mercy in this presence!

172 O ghostly treasure, O ransomer and redeemer!  
172 Of all the world hope and conduyter,

certain situation, may "*bind (one) to more penance*".

**him bind** = bind himself, ie. fasten or tie himself.

= likely a metaphorical image only; see, e.g., this poor man's prayer in a 1582 work: "*if at any time...I do transgress thy commandments...pour the oil and wine of mercy and forgiveness into those wounds, which sin shall make in me.*" There were frequent references to a figurative *oil of grace* and *oil of mercy* in early printed literature.

= lightened.<sup>4</sup>

851: **knots** = ie. the **knots** of the lash, created by tying up the cord into knots.

**hard within** = ie. "felt acutely within my body."<sup>4</sup>

= "no matter the level of pain you must endure."

= "whenever you ask it".

= righteousness.

166: allusion to Christ's birth from the Virgin Mary.

167: "because God is willing to redeem every man".

168: an obscure line: in 16th century literature, **Adam** was frequently described as having **forfeited** God's gift of righteousness and position as master of all the domain on earth.

Lester, however, proposes the line to mean either (1) "whom Adam caused to be damned by his disobedience" (if **Which** refers to Everyman), or (2) "whom Adam wronged" (if **Which** refers to God). See Lester, p. 88.<sup>7</sup>

169: **Godhead** = divine nature of God, or the "quality of being God" (OED);<sup>1</sup> **blessed Godhead** was a common collocation.

**elect** = term universally used, in a religious context, to refer to one chosen by God, typically through Christ, for eternal salvation. The use here of **elect** to describe the creator is perhaps without precedent. Bruster suggests **elect** here is used to mean "one chosen for a function" (OED, *elect*, n.2, def. 2), referring to Christ, who God selected to redeem mankind.

**Divine** = ie. divinity.<sup>1,4</sup>

171: **cry thee mercy** = "ask for thy forgiveness", a common expression.

**in this presence** = in this company or assembly,<sup>2</sup> specifically referring to Knowledge and Confession.<sup>4</sup>

= spiritual.

= conductor, ie. leader or guide; a Middle English form.

174	Mirror of joy, <u>foundatour</u> of mercy, Which <u>enlumineth</u> Heaven and earth <u>thereby</u> :	= founder, originator, <sup>1</sup> ie. source. <sup>3</sup> 175: <i>enlumineth</i> = illuminates; an obsolete Middle English word. <i>thereby</i> = "also", <sup>1</sup> or "as a result". <sup>7</sup>
176	Hear my <u>clamorous complaint</u> , though it <u>late</u> be;  Receive my prayers <u>unworthy in this heavy life</u> ;	176: <i>clamorous complaint</i> = alliteratively, "vociferous and urgent lamentation or petition". <sup>1</sup> <i>late</i> = ie. late in Everyman's life.  177: a request for God to receive Everyman's prayers, which he calls <i>unworthy</i> , acknowledging that he does not deserve to be heard. For line 177, Huth prints, " <i>Receive my prayers in thy benignity</i> ", ie. kindness or favour". <sup>1</sup>
178	Though I be a sinner most abominable, Yet let my name be written in <u>Moyses' table</u> . –	179: <i>Moyses' table</i> = ie. Moses' tablets; <i>Moyses</i> was the preferred form of <i>Moses</i> until the early 16th century. Moses' two tablets of the ten commandments were universally referred to as his <i>tables</i> , at least through the end of the 17th century, and was still used in the 18th century. Of this line, Cawley writes that Moses' two tablets were regarded by Medieval theologians as "symbols of baptism and penance respectively. Thus Everyman is asking to be numbered among those who have escaped damnation by doing penance for their sins" (p. 224). <sup>4</sup>
180 182	O Mary, pray to the Maker of all thing Me for to help at my <u>ending</u> , And save me fro the power of <u>my enemy</u> ,  For <u>Death</u> assaileth me strongly.	<b>180-187 (below):</b> Everyman prays to the Virgin Mary.  = death. <sup>1</sup> = ie. Satan. <sup>1</sup>  183: Everyman's death is imminent; <i>Death</i> was frequently described as <i>assailing</i> an individual.
184	And, <u>Lady</u> , that I may by mean of thy prayer Of your son's glory to be <u>partiner</u> ,	184-5: Everyman asks Mary to pray, on his behalf, that he may "share in Jesus' glory" (Cawley, p. 224). <sup>4</sup> <i>Lady</i> = common name for the Virgin Mary. <i>partiner</i> = ie. partner; a Middle English form.
186 188	<u>By the mean of his passion</u> I it crave; I beseech you help my soul to save. – Knowledge, give me the scourge of penance: My flesh therewith shall <u>give acquittance</u> ;	= by means of Christ's suffering ( <i>passion</i> ) on the cross.  = pay, as a debt.
190	I will now begin, if God give me grace.	<b>190: the desire for grace cannot originate from within one's own person: Catholic doctrine is clear that "man is unable even to begin repentance for his misdeeds unless God supply the first motion in him." (Ryan, p. 727).<sup>6</sup></b>
192	[ <i>Knowledge gives scourge to Everyman.</i> ]	192: stage direction suggested by Bruster.
194 196 198	<b>Knowledge.</b> Everyman, God give you <u>time and space</u> ! Thus I bequeath you <u>in</u> the hands of our Saviour; Now may you make your reckoning sure.	= ie. time and opportunity; a common collocation. = ie. into.
198	<b>Everyman.</b>	

200	In the name of all the Holy Trinity, My body punished <u>sore</u> shall be:	201-9: Everyman apostrophizes to his own body. <i>sore</i> = severely.
202	Take this, body, for the sin of the flesh; –	
204	<i>[Everyman removes his fine clothes and whips himself.]</i>	204-5: stage direction adopted in part from Lester.
206	<u>Also</u> thou delightest to go <u>gay</u> and <u>fresh</u> ;	207: <i>Also</i> = even so. <sup>16</sup> <i>gay and fresh</i> = ie. smartly appareled, brightly coloured; Chaucer wrote in the early 15th century, " <i>I was wont to be right fresh and gay / Of clothing and of other good array.</i> " This was a common collocation, though almost always written as <i>fresh and gay</i> .
208	And in the way of dampnation thou did me bring: Therefore suffer now strokes and punishing. –	
210	Now <u>of</u> penance I will wade the water clear,	210: Knowledge had referred to Confession as <i>that cleans- ing river</i> back at line 95. <i>of</i> = in.
	To save me from <u>Purgatory</u> , that <u>sharp</u> <u>fire</u> .	211: <i>Purgatory</i> is, in Christian theology, the place which every saved soul must visit, prior to being admitted to Heaven, to endure a finite amount of punishment in order to cleanse the soul of all forgiven sins. Everyman, by taking his licks now, hopes to skip Purgatory and proceed directly to Heaven. <i>sharp</i> = harsh, severe. <i>fire</i> = literature frequently referred to the <i>fire of Purgatory</i> as representing the purifying punishment that souls would be forced to endure in the afterlife. <sup>1</sup>
212	<i>[Good Deeds rises from the ground.]</i>	213: Everyman's self-mortification has given Good Deeds the strength to stand up.  <b>An alert reader may note that Good Deeds has recovered his strength, despite the fact that Everyman still has not performed any traditional "good deeds"; however, as Ryan explains, "carrying out penance is itself a good work because penance is an act of love...as well as of reparation." (p. 729).<sup>6</sup></b>
214		
	<b><i>Good Deeds.</i></b>	
216	I thank God, now I can walk and go, And am <u>delivered of</u> my sickness and woe;	= liberated or freed from.
218	Therefore with Everyman I will go, <u>and not spare</u> ; His good works I will help him to <u>declare</u> .	= "and do everything in my power to assist him." = expound (to God).
220		
	<b><i>Knowledge.</i></b>	
222	Now, Everyman, be merry and glad: Your Good Deeds cometh now, ye <u>may</u> not be sad.	= ie. need.
224	Now is your Good Deeds <u>whole and sound</u> , Going upright upon the ground.	= healthy, in good condition; a common collocation.
226		225: ie. able to stand and walk.
	<b><i>Everyman.</i></b>	
228	My heart is light, and shall be evermore; Now will I <u>smite</u> faster than I did before.	= strike.
230		
232	<i>[Everyman scourges himself again.]</i>	231: stage direction from Lester.



<p>234 <b>Good Deeds.</b> Everyman pilgrim, my special friend, Blessed be thou without end, 236 For thee is <u>preparate the</u> eternal glory: Ye have me made whole and sound; 238 Therefore I will <u>bide by</u> thee in every <u>stound</u>.</p> <p>240 <b>Everyman.</b> Welcome, my Good Deeds, now I hear thy voice; 242 I weep for very sweetness of love.</p> <p>244 <b>Knowledge.</b> Be no more sad, but ever rejoice; 246 God seeth thy <u>living in his trone</u> above.</p> <p>Put on this garment <u>to thy behove</u>,</p> <p>248 Which is wet with your tears, Or else before God you may <u>it miss</u>, 250 When ye to your journey's end come shall.</p> <p>252 [Knowledge gives garment to Everyman.]</p> <p>254 <b>Everyman.</b> Gentle Knowledge, what do ye it call? 256</p> <p><b>Knowledge.</b> 258 It is a <u>garment of sorrow</u>,</p> <p>From pain it will you <u>borrow</u>: 260 <u>Contrition</u> it is, That <u>getteth</u> forgiveness;</p> <p>262 <u>It</u> pleaseth God <u>passing</u> well.</p> <p>264 <b>Good Deeds.</b> Everyman, will you wear it for your <u>hele</u>? 266</p> <p>[Everyman puts on the garment of sorrow.]</p> <p>268 <b>Everyman.</b> 270 Now blessed be <u>Jesu</u>, Mary's son, For now <u>have I on</u> true contrition; 272 And let us go now without <u>tarrying</u>. – Good Deeds, have we <u>clear</u> our reckoning? 274</p>	<p>= prepared for; <b>preparate</b> is a Middle English word.</p> <p>= remain with. = difficult challenge, trial.<sup>1,4</sup></p> <p>246: <b>living</b> = life. <b>in</b> = from. <b>trone</b> = ie. throne; the preferred form until the mid-16th century. If God has been sitting on an on-stage throne since he first entered at the beginning of Act I, Knowledge might even gesture towards him.</p> <p>= "for thy benefit"; <b>behove</b>, a noun, was a Middle English form of <i>behoof</i>.</p> <p>= ie. "wish you had it with you".</p> <p>252: stage direction from Lester.</p> <p>= as Knowledge explains, the <b>garment of sorrow</b> represents contrition and penitence. The expression <b>garment of sorrow</b> itself first appears in a Bible in the Geneva version of 1561, in a footnote to Isaiah 52:2: "<i>put off the garments of sorrow and put on the apparel of joy and gladness.</i>"</p> <p>= protect.<sup>1</sup> = genuine sorrow and regret for sins committed. = obtains.</p> <p>262: <b>It</b> = Britwell and Huth both print <b>He</b> here, but all the editors adopt BL's <b>It</b>. <b>passing</b> = exceedingly.</p> <p>= (spiritual) health or well-being,<sup>1</sup> hence "salvation".<sup>4</sup></p> <p>ie. Jesus; a common Middle English form. = ie. "I am wearing". = lingering, ie. "remaining here any longer." = purified, by washing away the stain of sin.</p>
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276	[ <i>Good Deeds</i> <u>takes up the book of account.</u> ]	= ie. picks up; stage direction by editor. Bruster's stage direction suggests that <i>Good Deeds</i> only points to the book of account on the ground.
278	<b><i>Good Deeds.</i></b> Yea, indeed, I have [it] here.	= <i>it</i> is absent from Britwell, but present in Huth (BL prints <i>them</i> ).
280	<b><i>Everyman.</i></b> Then I trust we need not fear;	
282	Now, friends, let us not <u>part in twain</u> .	= ie. separate. <sup>3</sup>
284	<b><i>Knowledge.</i></b> Nay, Everyman, that will we <u>not certain</u> .	= ie. certainly not do.
286		<b>lines 282-285:</b> the editions all print <i>twain</i> and <i>certain</i> as <i>twayne</i> and <i>certayne</i> , indicating that the two words would rhyme absolutely: <i>tway-ne</i> / <i>cer-tay-ne</i> .
288	<b><i>Good Deeds.</i></b> Yet must thou lead with thee	288-9: Everyman must call upon three other powerful entities to accompany him, along with <i>Good Deeds</i> and <i>Knowledge</i> . Note another subtle change: rather than follow his companions on the journey, Everyman is being called on now to lead.
290	Three persons of great <u>might</u> .	<i>might</i> = power; in Middle English, pronounced <i>meekht</i> (the <i>gh</i> sounded as a soft guttural); would rhyme with line 295's <i>hight</i> ( <i>heekht</i> ).
292	<b><i>Everyman.</i></b> Who should they be?	
294	<b><i>Good Deeds.</i></b> Discretion and Strength they <u>hight</u> ,	= are called.
296	And thy Beauty may not <u>abide</u> behind.	= stay.
298	<b><i>Knowledge.</i></b> Also ye must call to mind	<b>298-300 (below):</b> earlier in the play, Death had admonished Everyman for not using his five wits, ie. his senses, to choose a better path to follow in life; now <i>Knowledge</i> advises him to employ his five wits more wisely. <sup>8</sup>
300	Your Five Wits as for your councillors.	
302	<b><i>Good Deeds.</i></b> You must have them ready <u>at all hours</u> .	= ie. at all times.
304		
306	<b><i>Everyman.</i></b> How shall I get them <u>hiddere</u> ?	= to come here.
308	<b><i>Knowledge.</i></b> You must call them all <u>togidder</u> ,	= simultaneously.
310	And they will hear you <u>incontinent</u> .	= at once, immediately. <sup>1</sup>
312	<b><i>Everyman.</i></b> My friends, come hiddere, and be present,	
314	Discretion, Strength, my Five Wits and Beauty.	

END of ACT III.

## ACT IV.

Everyman is joined by his personal attributes.

*Enter Beauty, Strength, Discretion and Five Wits.*

1 **Beauty.** [To Good Deeds]  
2 Here at your will we be all ready;  
3 What will ye that we should do?  
4  
5 **Good Deeds.**  
6 That ye would with Everyman go,  
7 And help him in his pilgrimage:  
8 Advise you, will ye with him or not in that vyage?  
9  
10 **Strength.**  
11 We will bring him all thidder  
12 To his help and comfort, ye may believe me.  
13  
14 **Discretion.**  
15 So will we go with him all togidder.  
16  
17 **Everyman.**  
18 Almighty God, loved might Thou be!  
19 I give Thee laud that I have hidder brought  
20 Strength, Discretion, Beauty, and Five Wits; lack I nought.  
21 And my Good Deeds, with Knowledge clear,  
22 All be in my company at my will here;  
23 I desire no more to my business.  
24  
25  
26 **Strength.**  
27 And I, Strength, will by you stand in distress,

Having shed his reliance on external sources of support, Everyman is overjoyed to know that his personal attributes – his strength, beauty, discretion and five wits (senses) – will accompany him on his journey to the grave and beyond.

But why are these personal qualities only now made available to Everyman? After all, has he not always possessed his own individual human traits?

Ryan provides the answer: it is only after man "by penitence and forgiveness, has been restored to the life of grace, are the natural powers and qualities sanctified and made effectual for his new life." (p. 729).<sup>6</sup>

**Entering Characters:** unlike Fellowship, Kindred and Cousin, and Goods, whose presence can actually hinder a man's proper relationship with God, the new group of companions "are natural endowments, good in themselves, that make man the flower of creation and help him to fulfill his natural destiny." (Ryan, p. 729).<sup>6</sup>

= desire.

= consider this, think this over.<sup>1</sup> = ie. go with.

11: "we will all accompany him to there."

= ie. all together.

= praised.<sup>1</sup>

= praise.

= ie. "I now lack nothing."

23: "I need nothing else for this task."

**25-41 (below):** Bruster notes that each of the four new companions, in vowing to remain with Everyman, employs language characteristic of his or her innate qualities: **Strength** speaks in the language of physical might, **Five Wits** evokes the senses, **Beauty** speaks "attractively", and **Discretion** employs the language of prudence and careful judgment. See Bruster, p. 663.<sup>8</sup>

28 Though thou would in battle fight on the ground.  
 30 **Five Wits.**  
 And though it were through the world round,  
 32 We will not depart for sweet ne for sour.

**Beauty.**  
 34 No more will I unto death's hour,  
 36 Whatsoever thereof befall.

**Discretion.**  
 38 Everyman, advise you first of all,  
 Go with a good advisement and deliberation;  
 40 We all give you virtuous monition  
 That all shall be well.

**Everyman.**  
 44 My friends, hearken what I will tell:  
 I pray God reward you in His Heaven spere.

46 Now hearken all that be here,  
 For I will make my testament

48 Here before you all present:  
 In alms half my good I will give with my hands twain  
 50 In the way of charity with good intent,  
 And the other half still shall remain  
 52 In queath, to be returned there it ought to be;

54 This I do in despite of the fiend of hell,  
 To go quite out of his parell,

56 Ever after this day.

**Knowledge.**  
 58 Everyman, hearken what I say:

27: the image is of Everyman in a struggle with an over-  
 powering opponent who has forced him off his feet .  
 = "anywhere in the world" or "over the entire the world".<sup>1</sup>  
 = under any circumstances, good or bad; an extremely  
 common expression used to describe two extremes  
 and everything in between.  
*for...ne* = for neither...nor.

34-35: "I will not leave you until the moment of death, no  
 matter what happens."  
 = consider, ie. "give thought to this".<sup>1</sup>  
 = care, reflection.<sup>1</sup>  
 = beneficial intimation or notice.<sup>1</sup>

= listen.  
 = second allusion to the *spheres* of the universe; see the  
 note at Act I.94 above.  
 = ie. "all of you".  
 = declaration of what Everyman wants done with his pro-  
 perty after his death.  
 = "my two hands".

51-52: with this instruction that a portion of his estate be  
 returned to its rightful owners, Everyman seems to be  
 acknowledging that he obtained some of his wealth  
 unethically (Cawley, p. 227).<sup>4</sup>  
*In queath* = the meaning of this unique expression is  
 presumably "in bequest"; *queath* is an obsolete word which  
 as a verb could meant both "to speak" and "to bequeath";  
 however, we note that the OED defines the noun *queath* as  
 "a speech" only, with no corresponding definition of "a  
 bequest".  
 In place of *In queath*, Huth prints "*In quite*" (repayment),  
 and both fragments print "*I it bequeath*".  
*there* = ie. to where.  
 = in spite of, ie. in defiance of.<sup>1,7</sup>  
 54: *go quite out of* = entirely escape.<sup>1,9</sup>  
*parell* = ie. peril; the most common 15th century form,  
 employed here to rhyme with *hell* of the previous line.  
 55: ie. "forever."

**56-59 (below):** Knowledge encourages Everyman to see a  
 priest in order to receive the last sacraments offered before  
 death, the Eucharist (also called Communion) and extreme  
 unction.

Go to priesthood, I you advise,

60 And receive of him in any wise  
The holy sacrament and ointment togidder,

62 Then shortly see ye turn again hidder;  
We will all abide you here.

64 ***Five Wits.***

66 Yea, Everyman, hie you that ye ready were:

There is no emperor, king, duke, ne baron,  
68 That from God hath commission  
As hath the least priest in the world being;

70 For of the blessed sacraments pure and benign,

He beareth the keys, and thereof hath the cure  
72 For man's redemption, it is ever sure,  
Which God for our soul's medicine  
74 Gave us out of his heart with great pain,  
Here in this transitory life for thee and me.  
76 The blessed sacraments seven there be:  
Baptism, confirmation, with priesthood good,

78 And the sacrament of God's precious flesh and blood,

Marriage, the holy extreme unction, and penance;

80 These seven be good to have in remembrance,  
Gracious sacraments of high divinity.

= "see a priest".  
**priesthood** = may refer to a personified priest, while Walker suggests "Holy Orders".

= in any case.  
61: ie. the Eucharist and extreme unction both.  
**ointment** = ie. anointment.<sup>1</sup>  
62: "then immediately (**shortly**) return here".  
= wait for.

= "hurry and prepare yourself".

**67-69 (below):** even the least powerful priest has been granted more authority by God (to bestow God's grace by performing the sacraments) than are the foremost political and military leaders of the world.

**The play now enters what is frequently misunderstood to be a pointless "digression" on the powers and role of a priest in Catholic doctrine.**

**But if we keep in mind the didactic purpose of the play, then it is clear why this section is not at all a dramatic failure: the faithful must be reminded that they can only receive the sacraments, without which they risk not being saved, from a priest, for it is only the priest who can "bind and unbind" man, ie. free a man from the burden of his sins, and lead him to a perfect state of grace.**

= nor.  
68: ie. "to whom God has given sanction or authority".<sup>1,9</sup>  
= humblest, lowliest.<sup>1,3</sup>

70-75: only the priest can redeem man on earth.  
**benign** = salubrious.<sup>1</sup>

= spiritual responsibility or charge,<sup>1</sup> but perhaps also metaphorically connected to **medicine** in line 73 below.

= ie. through Christ's suffering on the cross.<sup>8</sup>

= perhaps meaning something like, "both or all of which are beneficial and efficacious when performed by a priest"; the primary purpose of the clause seems to be to provide a rhyme with line 78's **blood**.

78: ie. the third sacrament is the Eucharist, or Holy Communion; Roman Catholics believe that the bread and wine held by the priest are transubstantiated, or literally transformed, into the body (**flesh**) and **blood** of Christ.

= sacrament performed on one who is thought to be near death, comprised of anointment of the forehead and perhaps other sense organs, accompanied by a verbal formula asking God to forgive the recipient's sins.<sup>1,14</sup>

82	<b><i>Everyman.</i></b>	
84	Fain would I receive <u>that holy body</u> ,	= gladly. = ie. Christ's body in the Eucharist.
86	And <u>meekly</u> to my <u>ghostly fadder</u> I will go.	= humbly. <sup>1</sup> = spiritual father, ie. the priest.
	<b><i>Five Wits.</i></b>	
88	Everyman, that is the <u>best</u> that ye can do:	= ie. best thing.
90	God will you to salvation bring,	
92	For priesthood exceedeth all other thing.	
94	To <u>us</u> holy scripture <u>they</u> do teach,	= ie. all people. = ie. priests.
96	And converteth man <u>fro</u> sin <u>Heaven to reach</u> ;	= from. = ie. "in order for him to reach Heaven."
	God hath to <u>them</u> more power given	= ie. priests.
	Than to ony angel that is in Heaven:	
	With five words he may consecrate	
	God's body in flesh and blood to <u>take</u> ,	95-96: by speaking the five words " <i>Hoc est enim corpus meum</i> " ("this is my very body"), the priest converts the bread of the Eucharist into Christ's body; to transform the wine, which has been mixed with water, into Christ's blood, he recites the formula, " <i>hic est enim calix sanguinis mei</i> ", ie. "this is the very cup of my blood". <b>take</b> = receive.
	And handleth his Maker between his hands;	97: by holding the consecrated bread and wine in his hands, the priest can be said to be physically holding the body of Christ.
98	The priest bindeth and unbindeth all <u>bands</u>	98-100: a metaphor for the priest's ability to release individuals from the "chain of their sins", by bestowing God's grace on those who repent those sins. <sup>10</sup>
	Both in earth and in Heaven; –	The figurative language comes from Matthew 16:19, the famous verse in which Christ says to Peter, as he grants him the keys of the kingdom, " <i>and whatever thou shalt bind on earth, shall be bounden also in heavens; and whatever thou shalt unbind on earth, shall be unbounden also in heavens.</i> " <b>bands</b> = fetters. <sup>1</sup>
100	Thou <u>ministers</u> all the sacraments seven;	100-4: an apostrophe to priests. <b>ministers</b> = ie. administrators.
	Though we kiss thy feet, <u>thou were worthy</u> :	= "you are worthy of it." <sup>7</sup>
102	Thou art surgeon that cureth sin deadly;	102: Five Wits briefly returns to the medical analogy he introduced at line 71 above.
	No remedy may we find under God,	
104	But all <u>only</u> priesthood. –	= ie. only from. <sup>4</sup>
106	Everyman, God gave <u>priest[s]</u> that <u>dignity</u> ,	= all four early editions print singular <b>priest</b> here. = office.
108	And setteth them <u>in his stead</u> among us to be:	= in God's place, ie. as his representative.
	Thus be they above angels in <u>degree</u> .	= rank, status.
110		109-110: Everyman exits the stage.
	[ <i>Everyman goes to the Priest to receive the last sacraments.</i> ]	
		<b>112-126 (below): Knowledge takes some time to censure those priests who engage in sinful behaviour. The criticism, however, does not appear in a vacuum, because the harm done goes beyond that which affects the bad priests themselves.</b> <b>Rather, if priests are seen to be morally defective or corrupt, then people will be less likely to visit them to receive the sacraments, which would prevent them from achieving a state of perfect grace, thus reducing their</b>

112 **Knowledge.**  
 If priests be good, it is so surely;  
 114 But when Jesu hanged on the cross with great smart,  
 There he gave us out of his blessed heart  
 116 The same sacrament in great torment.  
He sold them not to us, that Lord omnipotent:

118 Therefore Saint Peter the Apostle doth say,  
 That Jesus' curse hath all they,  
 120 Which God their Saviour do buy or sell,  
 Or they for any money do take or tell.

122 Sinful priests giveth the sinners example bad:  
 Their children sitteth by other men's fires, I have hard,

124 And some haunteth women's company,  
 With unclean life, as lusts of lechery;

126 These be with sin made blind.

128 **Five Wits.**  
 I trust to God, no such may we find:  
 130 Therefore let us priesthood honour,  
 And follow their doctrine for our soul's succour;  
 132 We be their sheep, and they shepherds be,  
 By whom we all be kept in surety. –

134 Peace! for yonder I see Everyman come,  
 Which hath made true satisfaction.

136 **Good Deeds.**  
 138 Methink it is he indeed.

140 *Re-Enter Everyman carrying a crucifix.*

142 **Everyman.**  
 Now Jesu be your alder speed!

144 I have received the sacrament for my redemption,  
 And then mine extreme unction;  
 146 Blessed be all they that counselled me to take it. –  
 And now, friends, let us go without longer respice;  
 148 I thank God that ye have tarried so long.

**chances of entering Heaven on their deaths. See Ryan, p. 734.<sup>6</sup>**

= ie. then it is certainly true that priests are above angels.<sup>4</sup>  
 = intense physical pain.

117: **He sold them not to us** = ie. God sacrificed his son on the cross freely.<sup>3</sup>  
**the Lord omnipotent** = ie. "did the all-powerful Lord."

118-120: Knowledge censures those priests who take money in return for administering the sacraments.<sup>3</sup> He alludes to Acts 18,<sup>7</sup> in which **Peter** severely rebukes the apostle Simon for offering to purchase the power to bestow the Holy Spirit (at 8:18, Peter says, "*This money be with thee into perdition, for thou guesses (ed: ie. supposes) the gift of God should be had for money!*").  
**tell** = count.

123: some wicked priests have had children with other men's wives.  
**hard** = ie. heard; common Middle English form (*harde*).

= frequent.  
 125: **unclean** = immoral.  
**lusts of lechery** = ie. "delights of lechery", a common expression.  
 = ie. such priests. = morally destitute.<sup>1</sup>

= ie. "that no such bad priests".

= assistance.  
 132: common metaphor for a congregation and its priest.  
 = ie. the priest is responsible for our spiritual well-being.  
**surety** = security, freedom from danger.<sup>1</sup>  
 = silence!

135: ie. who has atoned for his sins by completing penance and receiving the final sacraments.

140: stage direction suggested by Bruster.

143: ie. "now may God aid you!"<sup>9</sup>  
**alder** = an intensifier.  
 = ie. the Eucharist.

= delay.  
 = ie. "waited this long for me."

Now set each of you on this rod your hond,

150 And shortly follow me;  
I go before, there I would be:  
152 God be our guide.

154 [They grasp the crucifix in turn.]

156 **Strength.**  
Everyman, we will not fro you go,  
158 Till ye have done this vyage long.

160 **Discretion.**  
I, Discretion, will bide by you also.

162 **Knowledge.**  
164 And though this pilgrimage be never so strong,

I will never part you fro:  
166 Everyman, I will be as sure by thee  
As ever I did by Judas Maccabee.

END of ACT IV.

149: **rod** = rood, ie. crucifix; the editions all print *rodde*, a common Middle English variant.

**hond** = ie. hand; a common Middle English variant (*honde*).

= quickly.<sup>1</sup>

= ie. "I will lead, and take you where I want to be."<sup>3</sup>

= Britwell prints **your** here, but the editors universally adopt **our**, as printed in the other editions.

154: stage direction by Lester. The companions take turns vowing to remain with Everyman. We note that Beauty, whether she grasps the cross or not, omits making a verbal promise to Everyman.

= "leave or abandon you".

= completed.

162: "and no matter how oppressive (**strong**) this journey becomes".<sup>2</sup>

= ie. "from you;" the words are inverted so that the line may rhyme with lines 157 and 161.

= "reliable" or "loyal to you".

167: the story of the military defeat of the Syrians and recapturing of Jerusalem by the Jews, led by **Judas Maccabee**, in 164 B.C., is told in the apocryphal books 1 and 2 of Maccabees. 1 Maccabees 2:66 describes Judas as "*strong in might from his youth*".



## ACT V.

His account book ready, Everyman dies and goes to meet God, accompanied only by Good Deeds.

[*Everyman comes to his grave.*]

1 **Everyman.**

2 Alas! I am so faint I may not stand,  
My limmes under me doth fold; –

4 Friends, let us not turn again to this land,  
Not for all the world's gold;  
6 For into this cave must I creep,

8 And turn to the earth, and there to sleep.

**Beauty.**

10 What, into this grave? Alas!

12 **Everyman.**

14 Yea, there shall ye consume more and less.

**Beauty.**

16 And what, should I smoder here?

18 **Everyman.**

20 Yea, by my faith, and never more appear;  
In this world live no more we shall,  
But in Heaven before the highest Lord of all.

22

**Beauty.**

24 I cross out all this: adieu, by Saint Johan;

26 I take my tap in my lap, and am gone.

In his final moments on earth, Everyman learns another painful truth: that his personal attribute – his beauty, strength, discretion and five wits (ie. his senses) – will also abandon him at the moment of death. A man's individual, personal qualities will avail him nothing when it is his turn to meet God. The audience is hence reminded "of man's utter dependence on God." (Ryan, p. 732.)<sup>6</sup>

= "am unable to"

= limbs, ie. legs; common Middle English variant that persisted well into the 17th century.

= return.

= hollow in the ground,<sup>1</sup> ie. his grave.

= return to the earth; an allusion to Genesis 3:19, which admonishes that man shall "*turn again into the earth of which thou are taken; for thou art dust, and thou shalt turn again into dust.*"

13: **consume** = decay.<sup>1</sup>

**more and less** = could mean "entirely" or "completely",<sup>1</sup> or "everyone, great and small".<sup>1,8</sup>

= smother, ie. suffocate to death;<sup>1</sup> a Middle English variant.

= ie. "in Heaven we shall live".

24-25: Beauty reneges on her promise to remain by Everyman; though we may note that Beauty only promised to accompany Everyman to the moment of death, but not beyond! (see Act IV.34-35 above).

**cross out** = cancel or take back by making the mark of a cross.<sup>1</sup>

**adieu** = good-bye.

**Johan** = ie. John.

= expression meaning, "to pack up".

The *Scottish National Dictionary*, quoting an older source, explains that the phrase was "borrowed from the practice of women accustomed to spin from a rock [distaff], who often carried their work with them to the house of some

28 *Everyman.*  
What, Beauty? whidder will ye?

30 *Beauty.*  
Peace! I am deaf, I look not behind me,  
32 Not and thou wouldest give me all the gold in thy chest.

34 [Exit Beauty.]

36 *Everyman.*  
Alas! whereto may I trust?  
38 Beauty goth fast away fro me:  
She promised with me to live and die.

40 *Strength.*  
42 Everyman, I will thee also forsake and deny:  
Thy game liketh me not at all.

44 *Everyman.*  
46 Why then ye will forsake me all: –  
Strength, tarry a little space.

48 *Strength.*  
50 Nay, sir, by the rod of grace,  
I will hie me from thee fast,

52 Though thou weep to thy heart to brast.

54 *Everyman.*  
Ye would ever bide by me, ye said.

56 *Strength.*  
58 Yea, I have you fer enough conveyed:

Ye be old enough, I understand,  
60 Your pilgrimage to take on hand;  
I repent me that I hidder came.

62 *Everyman.*  
64 Strength, you to displeas I am to blame;

Will ye break promise that is debt?

66

neighbour. An individual when about to depart, was wont to wrap up in her apron, the flax or lint-tap at which she was spinning, together with her distaff."<sup>18</sup>

= "where are you going?"

= quiet. = Beauty will listen to no further entreaties.

= "(even) if you were to".

= in what direction, ie. whom.

= goes, is going.

= reject.

= undertaking, state of affairs.<sup>1</sup> = pleases.

= "linger here for a little while."

*space* = time.

= rood, ie. crucifix.

= hurry.

= "until your heart bursts."

*to* = only Britwell prints *to* here; the other editions print *till*, which some editors adopt. But *to*, which could be used to mean "until" (see OED, *to*, *prep.*, def. II.6.a), is also correct.

*brast* = burst, dominant Middle English form until the early 16th century.

= always.

= far; *fer* (and *ferre*) were originally the dominant form, until the 1520's, when *far* (and *farre*) became preferred.

= know.

= "take upon yourself."

= regret.

= on its face, the line appears to mean, "it is my fault that you have been made unhappy." Walker, however, interprets *blame* to mean "reluctant"; Bruster repunctuates the line completely: "Strength, you too displeas. I am to blame", meaning, "you are displeas. I am to blame."

65: to say that *promise is debt*, ie. that it is binding, was proverbial; at Act II.75 above, Fellowship similarly quipped, *promise is duty*.

For line 65, BL prints "*Yet promise is debt; this ye well wot*", which would rhyme with line 68.

= waste, expend.  
= "throw yourself"; *thrist* = thrust; a Middle English form.

76: "I thought for sure I could depend on you."  
*wend* = believed, imagined.  
*surer* = more reliable.<sup>1</sup>

78: Britwell, Huth and RP begin the line with *She*, suggesting that Strength is female; however, the woodcut illustration appearing in Britwell portrays Strength as a male character. (BL prints line 78, "*Is greatly deceived at the length*").  
*at the length* = in the end.

83: Discretion will follow Strength.

= ie. goeth, goes.

= with pity or mercy.

= near.  
= everyone; a Middle English form.

105-6: all attributes fail us in the end; the only thing we can surely depend on is God.  
107: alliterative metaphor of Death blowing his horn, announcing his arrival.  
= run.

= ie. others.

68 **Strength.**  
In faith, I care not;  
Thou art but a fool to complain:  
70 You spend your speech and waste your brain;  
Go, thrist thee into the ground.

[Exit Strength.]

74 **Everyman.**  
76 I had wend surer I should you have found: –

He that trusteth in his Strength,  
78 She him deceiveth at the length;

Both Strength and Beauty forsaketh me,  
80 Yet they promised me fair and lovingly.

82 **Discretion.**  
Everyman, I will after Strength be gone;  
84 As for me, I will leave you alone.

86 **Everyman.**  
Why, Discretion, will ye forsake me?

88 **Discretion.**  
90 Yea, in faith, I will go fro thee;  
For when Strength goth before,  
92 I follow after evermore.

94 **Everyman.**  
Yet, I pray thee, for love of the Trinity,  
96 Look in my grave once piteously.

98 **Discretion.**  
Nay, so nigh will I not come. –  
100 Farewell, everychone.

[Exit Discretion.]

104 **Everyman.**  
O, all thing faileth, save God alone,  
106 Beauty, Strength, and Discretion:  
For, when Death bloweth his blast,

108 They all ren fro me full fast.

110 **Five Wits.**  
Everyman, my leave now of thee I take;  
112 I will follow the other, for here I thee forsake.

114 **Everyman.**

116 Alas! then may I wail and weep,  
For I took you for my best friend.

118 **Five Wits.**

I will no lenger thee keep:  
120 Now farewell, and there an end.

122 [Exit Five Wits.]

124 **Everyman.**

O, Jesu, help! all hath forsaken me.

126

**Good Deeds.**

128 Nay, Everyman, I will bide with thee,  
I will not forsake thee indeed;  
130 Thou shalt find me a good friend at need.

132 **Everyman.**

Gramercy, Good Deeds, now may I true friends see.  
134 They have forsaken me everychone:  
I loved them better than my good deeds alone. –  
136 Knowledge, will ye forsake me also?

138 **Knowledge.**

Yea, Everyman, when ye to death shall go;  
140 But not yet for no manner of danger.

142 **Everyman.**

Gramercy, Knowledge, with all my heart.

144

**Knowledge.**

146 Nay, yet I will not from here depart,  
Till I see where ye shall be come.

148

**Everyman.**

150 Methink, alas! that I must be gone  
To make my reckoning, and my debts pay,  
152 For I see my time is nigh spent away. –

= " no longer look after you."²

= "and there it ends",¹ or "and that's that".⁸

122: the last of Everyman's personal qualities deserts him. We may note the scene's metaphorical point, that by the time an individual reaches the moment of death, he or she will have literally lost – the play suggests in this order – his or her beauty, strength, discretion and five physical senses.

**125: Everyman has lost sight of Good Deeds. Indeed, "until death, Good Deeds remains in the background, since good works are not given their reward until after death." (Ryan, p. 732).⁶**

= ie. "in your need."

= everyone.

139-140: Knowledge will stay with Everyman until the actual point of the latter's death, no matter the peril involved, but no further.

143: Knowledge's refusal to accompany Everyman to the grave is the final blow to Everyman's expectations. But Everyman, now fully mature, gives thanks for Knowledge's devoted and unceasing guidance, instead of expressing disappointment or bitterness.

**Knowledge's abandonment of Everyman at the point of his death has its own unique doctrinal significance: "Acknowledgement of sin is necessary only to the moment of death; after death it is not necessary, since the redeemed sinner, having performed his good works in keeping with the will of God, rejoices in the divine forgiveness and has no need of sorrow for past transgression when judgment is passed upon him." (Ryan, p. 732).⁶**

= "what shall become of you."

150-2: Everyman feels death overtaking him.

= nearly.

Take ensample, all ye that this do hear or see,  
154 How they that I love best do forsake me,  
Except my Good Deeds, that bideth truly.

156 **Good Deeds.**  
158 All earthly things is but vanity:  
Beauty, Strength, and Discretion do man forsake,  
160 Foolish friends and kinsmen, that fair spake;

All fleeth save Good Deeds, and that am I.

162 **Everyman.**  
164 Have mercy on me, God most mighty,  
And stand by me, thou moder and maid Mary.

166 **Good Deeds.**  
168 Fear not, I will speak for thee.

170 **Everyman.**  
Here I cry, God mercy!

172 **Good Deeds.**  
174 Short our end and minish our pain:

Let us go, and never come again.

176 **Everyman.**  
178 Into thy hands, Lord, my soul I commend:

Receive it, Lord, that it be not lost.  
180 As thou me boughtest, so me defend,

And save me from the fiend's boast,

182 That I may appear with that blessed host  
That shall be saved at the day of dome:

184 *In manus tuas, of mights most,*  
For ever *commendo spiritum meum*.

186

153-5: Everyman addresses the audience.

**Take ensample** = "follow my example".  
= only in Britwell: the other editions print *loved* here.  
= "remains with me faithfully."

158: Ecclesiastes 1:2: "*all things be vanity*", ie. all material and worldly things are, in the end, meaningless or futile.

= "spoke fair words", ie. made promises they would not keep.

= except for.

= mother. = Virgin.

168: happily for Everyman, Good Deeds' announcement that he will speak on Everyman's behalf repudiates Death's warning at Act I.119 above that Everyman will have "none attorney" to represent him.

174: **Short** = ie. shorten.

**minish** = ie. diminish, but with a different root word than **minish**; hence the two have separate entries in the OED.

= return.

= commit, deliver; the OED says, "to commit with a prayer."

The famous words of Christ, "*Into thy hands I commend my spirit*" did not appear in English until the printing of the Tyndale Bible. Wycliffe renders Luke 23:46 as, "*Father, into thine hands I betake my spirit.*"

180: **As thou me boughtest** = "as you (Christ) suffered, and thereby atoned, for my sins".

**defend** = protect.<sup>1</sup>  
= ie. the threat of Satan.<sup>8</sup>

182-3: Everyman prays to be saved at Judgment Day (**the day of dome**, ie. doom), a future event predicted in the New Testament, at which time all men will be judged and sentenced finally to either eternal damnation or life.

**That** = ie. so that.

**host** = multitude.

184-5: the Latin is from Luke 23:46 of the Vulgate Bible:

"*Into thy hands (**In manus tuas**) I commend my spirit*".

These were Christ's last words before dying on the cross.

**of mights most** = "of greatest power" (Walker, p. 116),<sup>3</sup> or "most mighty one" (Cawley, p. 233).<sup>4</sup>

[Everyman and Good Deeds sink into the grave.]

188

**Knowledge.**

190 Now hath he suffered that we all shall endure,  
The Good Deeds shall make all sure.

= ie. that which.

191: Good Deeds will make sure that Everyman makes it to Heaven.

= "reached his end", ie. died.

192 Now hath he made ending:  
Methinketh that I hear angels sing,  
194 And make great joy and melody,  
Where Everyman's soul received shall be.

196

[Enter Angel.]

197: Lester's stage direction here reads: "Angelic music. An Angel appears in a high place with Everyman's Book of Reckoning and receives his soul, which has risen from the ground." (p. 101).<sup>7</sup>

198

**The Angel.**

200 Come, excellent elect spouse to Jesu,

200: *elect* = chosen by God for salvation.<sup>1</sup>

*spouse to Jesu* = allusion to the soul as being symbolically married to, ie. united with, God.<sup>1,4</sup> Early literature frequently admonished men to seek no other spouse than Christ.

202 Here above thou shalt go,  
Because of thy singular virtue.  
Now the soul is taken the body fro,  
204 Thy reckoning is crystal clear;

= ie. to Heaven.

= "notable"<sup>1</sup> or "own".<sup>7</sup>

= "from the body".

= pure; a very old expression that dates at least as far back as the early 15th century.

= ie. "shalt thou go". = see the note at Act I.94 above.

= ie. "all of you".

206 Now shalt thou into the heavenly spere,  
Unto the which all ye shall come  
That liveth well, after the day of dome.

208

[Exeunt Knowledge and Angel.]

EPILOGUE.

Enter Doctor.

**Entering Character:** the *Doctor* is an academically trained or learned teacher or clergyman.<sup>1,8</sup>

1 **Doctor.**

2 This moral all men may have in mind:

2: "everybody should keep the following lesson in mind." Instead of *moral*, the editions other than Britwell all print *memorial* here, meaning "chronicle" or "memory", ie. thing to remember.

Ye hearers, take it of worth, old and young,

3: "you who hear me, young and old, take this message at its true value".<sup>1</sup>

= ie. personified Pride.

4 And forsake Pride, for he deceiveth you in the end;  
And remember, Beauty, Five Wits, Strength, and  
Discretion,

6 They all at the last do every man forsake,  
Save his Good Deeds, there doth he take.

= in the end.

= except. = to God and Heaven.

8 But beware, and they be small,  
Before God he hath no help at all;

= "if his good deeds be few".

= "that man receives".

10 None excuse may be there for every man.

Alas, how shall he do than?

12 For after death amends may no man make,  
For then mercy and pity doth him forsake;  
14 If his reckoning be not clear, when he doth come,  
God will say, *Ite, maledicti, in ignem eternum*;  
16 And he that hath his account whole and sound,  
High in Heaven he shall be crowned;  
18 Unto which place God bring us all thidder,  
That we may live body and soul togidder;  
20 Thereto help the Trinity:  
Amen, say ye, for Saint Charity.

THUS ENDETH THIS MORAL PLAY  
OF EVERYMAN.

FINIS.

11: *how* = ie. what.

*than* = ie. then; spelled as shown to rhyme with line  
10's *man*.

12: "once you are dead, it is too late to earn points with  
God".

15: "*go, accursed, into everlasting fire*"; from the Vulgate  
Bible, Matthew 25:41.

19: at Judgment Day, our physical bodies will be resurrected  
and reunited with our souls.

## FOOTNOTES.

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