

EVERYMAN

CHARACTERS

EVERYMAN	STRENGTH
GOD: ADONAI	DISCRETION
DEATH	FIVE-WITS
MESSENGER	BEAUTY
FELLOWSHIP	KNOWLEDGE
COUSIN	CONFESSION
KINDRED	ANGEL
GOODS	DOCTOR
GOOD-DEEDS	

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 MAN-
NER OF A MORAL PLAY.

Messenger. I pray you all give your audience,
And hear this matter with reverence,
By figure a moral play —
The *Summoning of Everyman* called it is,
That of our lives and ending shows
How transitory we be all day.
This matter is wondrous precious,
But the intent of it is more gracious,
And sweet to bear away.
The story saith, — Man, in the beginning,
Look well, and take good heed to the ending,
Be you never so gay!

Ye think sin in the beginning full sweet,
Which in the end causeth thy soul to weep,
When the body lieth in clay.
Here shall you see how *Fellowship* and *Jollity*,
Both *Strength*, *Pleasure*, and *Beauty*,
Will fade from thee as flower in May.
For ye shall hear, how our heaven king
Calleth *Everyman* to a general reckoning:
Give audience, and hear what he doth say.
God. I perceive here in my majesty,
How that all creatures be to me unkind,
Living without dread in worldly prosperity:
Of ghostly sight the people be so blind,
Drowned in sin, they know me not for their God;
In worldly riches is all their mind,
They fear not my rightwiseness, the sharp rod;
My law that I shewed, when I for them died,
They forget clean, and shedding of my blood red;
I hanged between two, it cannot be denied;
To get them life I suffered to be dead;
I healed their feet, with thorns hurt was my head:
I could do no more than I did truly,
And now I see the people do clean forsake me.
They use the seven deadly sins damnable;
As pride, covetise, wrath, and lechery,
Now in the world be made commendable;
And thus they leave of angels the heavenly company;
Everyman liveth so after his own pleasure,
And yet of their life they be nothing sure:
I see the more that I them forbear
The worse they be from year to year;
All that liveth appaireth¹ fast,
Therefore I will in all the haste
Have a reckoning of Everyman's person
For and² I leave the people thus alone
In their life and wicked tempests,
Verily they will become much worse than beasts;
For now one would by envy another up eat;
Charity they all do clean forget.
I hoped well that Everyman

1. *appaireth*] is impaired, degenerates.

2. *and*] if.

In my glory should make his mansion,
 And thereto I had them all elect;
 But now I see, like traitors deject,
 They thank me not for the pleasure that I to them meant,
 Nor yet for their being that I them have lent;
 I proffered the people great multitude of mercy,
 And few there be that asketh it heartily;
 They be so cumbered with worldly riches,
 That needs on them I must do justice,
 On Everyman living without fear.

Where art thou, *Death*, thou mighty messenger?

Death. Almighty God, I am here at your will,
 Your commandment to fulfil.

God. Go thou to *Everyman*,
 And show him in my name
 A pilgrimage he must on him take,
 Which he in no wise may escape;
 And that he bring with him a sure reckoning
 Without delay or any tarrying.

Death. Lord, I will in the world go run over all,
 And cruelly outsearch both great and small;
 Every man will I beset that liveth beastly
 Out of God's laws, and dreadeth not folly:
 He that loveth riches I will strike with my dart,
 His sight to blind, and from heaven to depart,
 Except that alms be his good friend,
 In hell for to dwell, world without end.
 Lo, yonder I see *Everyman* walking;
 Full little he thinketh on my coming;
 His mind is on fleshly lusts and his treasure,
 And great pain it shall cause him to endure
 Before the Lord Heaven King.

Everyman, stand still; whither art thou going
 Thus gaily? Hast thou thy Maker forget?

Everyman. Why askst thou?

Wouldest thou wete?³

Death. Yea, sir, I will show you;
 In great haste I am sent to thee
 From God out of his majesty.

Everyman. What, sent to me?

Death. Yea, certainly.

Though thou have forget him here,

3. wete] wit, i.e., know.

He thinketh on thee in the heavenly sphere,
 As, or⁴ we depart, thou shalt know.

Everyman. What desireth God of me?

Death. That shall I show thee;
 A reckoning he will needs have
 Without any longer respite.

Everyman. To give a reckoning longer leisure I crave;
 This blind⁵ matter troubleth my wit.

Death. On thee thou must take a long journey:
 Therefore thy book of count with thee thou bring;
 For turn again thou can not by no way,
 And look thou be sure of thy reckoning:
 For before God thou shalt answer, and show
 Thy many bad deeds and good but a few;
 How thou hast spent thy life, and in what wise,
 Before the chief lord of paradise.
 Have ado that we were in that way,⁶
 For, wete thou well, thou shalt make none attournay.⁷

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

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

Everyman. O *Death*, thou comest when I had thee least in mind;
 In thy power it lieth me to save,
 Yet of my good will I give thee, if ye will be kind,
 Yea, a thousand pound shalt thou have,
 And defer this matter till another day.

Death. *Everyman*, it may not be by no way;
 I set not by gold, silver, nor riches,
 Ne⁸ by pope, emperor, king, duke, ne princes.
 For and I would receive gifts great,
 All the world I might get;
 But my custom is clean contrary.
 I give thee no respite: come hence, and not tarry.

Everyman. Alas, shall I have no longer respite?
 I may say *Death* giveth no warning:

4. or] ere, before.

5. blind] dark, obscure.

6. Have ado . . . way] [Let's] get to the business of proceeding on our way.

7. thou shalt . . . attournay] you cannot make anyone your mediator.

8. Ne] Nor.

To think on thee, it maketh my heart sick,
 For all unready is my book of reckoning.
 But twelve year and I might have abiding,
 My counting book I would make so clear,
 That my reckoning I should not need to fear.
 Wherefore, *Death*, I pray thee, for God's mercy,
 Spare me till I be provided of remedy.

Death. Thee availeth not to cry, weep, and pray:
 But haste thee lightly that you were gone the journey,
 And prove thy friends if thou can.
 For, wete thou well, the tide abideth no man,
 And in the world each living creature
 For *Adam's* sin must die of nature.

Everyman. *Death*, if I should this pilgrimage take,
 And my reckoning surely make,
 Show me, for saint *charity*,
 Should I not come again shortly?

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

Everyman. O gracious God, in the high seat celestial,
 Have mercy on me in this most need;
 Shall I have no company from this vale terrestrial
 Of mine acquaintance that way me to lead?

Death. Yea, if any be so hardy,
 That would go with thee and bear thee company.
 Hie⁹ thee that you were gone to God's magnificence,
 Thy reckoning to give before his presence.
 What, weenest¹⁰ thou thy life is given thee,
 And thy worldly goods also?

Everyman. I had wend so, verily.

Death. Nay, nay; it was but lent thee;
 For as soon as thou art go,
 Another awhile shall have it, and then go therefo
 Even as thou hast done.
 Everyman, thou art mad; thou hast thy wits five,¹¹
 And here on earth will not amend thy life,
 For suddenly I do come.

Everyman. O wretched caitiff, whither shall I flee,

9. *Hie*] Hurry, make haste.

10. *weenest*] think, suppose.

11. *thy five wits*] The five wits were commonly defined as common wit (sense), imagination, fantasy, estimation and memory.

That I might scape this endless sorrow!
 Now, gentle *Death*, spare me till to-morrow,
 That I may amend me
 With good advisement.

Death. Nay, thereto I will not consent,
 Nor no man will I respite,
 But to the heart suddenly I shall smite
 Without any advisement.
 And now out of thy sight I will me hie;
 See thou make thee ready shortly,
 For thou mayst say this is the day
 That no man living may scape away.

Everyman. Alas, I may well weep with sighs deep;
 Now have I no manner of company
 To help me in my journey, and me to keep;
 And also my writing is full unready.
 How shall I do now for to excuse me?
 I would to God I had never be gete!¹²
 To my soul a full great profit it had be;
 For now I fear pains huge and great.
 The time passeth; Lord, help that all wrought;
 For though I mourn it availeth nought.
 The day passeth, and is almost a-go,¹³
 I wot not well what for to do.

To whom were I best my complaint to make?
 What, and I to *Fellowship* thereof spake,
 And showed him of this sudden chance?
 For in him is all mine affiance;
 We have in the world so many a day
 Be on good friends in sport and play.
 I see him yonder, certainly;
 I trust that he will bear me company;
 Therefore to him will I speak to ease my sorrow.
 Well met, good *Fellowship*, and good morrow!

Fellowship speaketh. *Everyman*, good morrow by this day.
 Sir, why lookest thou so piteously?
 If any thing be amiss, I pray thee, me say,
 That I may help to remedy.

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

12. *be gete*] been gotten, been born.

13. *a-go*] gone.

Fellowship. My true friend, show to me your mind;
I will not forsake thee, unto my life's end,
In the way of good company.

Everyman. That was well spoken, and lovingly.

Fellowship. Sir, I must needs know your heaviness;
I have pity to see you in any distress;
If any have you wronged ye shall revenged be,
Though I on the ground be slain for thee, —
Though that I know before that I should die.

Everyman. Verily, *Fellowship*, gramercy.¹⁴

Fellowship. Tush! by thy thanks I set not a straw.
Show me your grief, and say no more.

Everyman. If I my heart should to you break,¹⁵
And then you to turn your mind from me,
And would not me comfort, when you hear me speak,
Then should I ten times sorrier be.

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

Everyman. Then be you a good friend at need:
I have found you true here before.

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

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

Fellowship. I speak of no deserving, by this day.
For he that will say and nothing do
Is not worthy with good company to go;
Therefore show me the grief of your mind,
As to your friend most loving and kind.

Everyman. I shall show you how it is;
Commaned I am to go a journey,
A long way, hard and dangerous,
And give a strait count without delay
Before the high judge Adonai.¹⁶
Wherefore I pray you, bear me company,
As ye have promised, in this journey.

Fellowship. That is matter indeed! Promise is duty,
But, and I should take such a voyage on me,
I know it well, it should be to my pain:

14. *gramercy*] great thanks.

15. *break*] open.

16. *Adonai*] God.

Also it make me afeard, certain.
But let us take counsel here as well as we can,
For your words would fear a strong man.

Everyman. Why, ye said, if I had need,
Ye would me never forsake, quick¹⁷ nor dead,
Though it were to hell truly.

Fellowship. So I said, certainly,
But such pleasures be set aside, thee sooth to say:
And also, if we took such a journey,
When should we come again?

Everyman. Nay, never again till the day of doom.

Fellowship. In faith, then will not I come there!
Who hath you these tidings brought?

Everyman. Indeed, *Death* was with me here.

Fellowship. Now, by God that all hath bought,
If *Death* were the messenger,
For no man that is living to-day
I will not go that loath journey —
Not for the father that begat me!

Everyman. Ye promised other wise, *pardie*.¹⁸

Fellowship. I wot well I say so truly;
And yet if thou wilt eat, and drink, and make good cheer,
Or haunt to women, the lusty company,
I would not forsake you, while the day is clear,
Trust me verily!

Everyman. Yea, thereto ye would be ready;
To go to mirth, solace, and play,
Your mind will sooner apply
Than to bear me company in my long journey.

Fellowship. Now, in good faith, I will not that way.
But and thou wilt murder, or any man kill,
In that I will help thee with a good will!

Everyman. O that is a simple advice indeed!
Gentle *fellow*, help me in my necessity;
We have loved long, and now I need,
And now, gentle *Fellowship*, remember me.

Fellowship. Whether ye have loved me or no,
By Saint John, I will not with thee go.

Everyman. Yet I pray thee, take the labour, and do so much for me

17. *quick*] living.

18. *pardie*] par Dieu, by God.

To bring me forward, for saint charity,
 And comfort me till I come without the town.
Fellowship. Nay, and thou would give me a new gown,
 I will not a foot with thee go;
 But and you had tarried I would not have left thee so.
 And as now, God speed thee in thy journey,
 For from thee I will depart as fast as I may.
Everyman. Whither away, *Fellowship*? will you forsake me?
Fellowship. Yea, by my fay,¹⁹ to God I betake thee.
Everyman. Farewell, good *Fellowship*; for this my heart is sore;
 Adieu for ever, I shall see thee no more.
Fellowship. In faith, *Everyman*, farewell now at the end;
 For you I will remember that parting is mourning.
Everyman. Alack! shall we thus depart indeed?
 Our Lady, help, without any more comfort,
 Lo, *Fellowship* forsaketh me in my most need:
 For help in this world whither shall I resort?
Fellowship herebefore with me would merry make;
 And now little sorrow for me doth he take.
 It is said, in prosperity men friends may find,
 Which in adversity be full unkind.
 Now whither for succour shall I flee,
 Sith that²⁰ *Fellowship* hath forsaken me?
 To my kinsmen I will truly,
 Praying them to help me in my necessity;
 I believe that they will do so,
 For kind will creep where it may not go.
 I will go say, for yonder I see them go.
 Where be ye now, my friends and kinsmen?
Kindred. Here be we now at your commandment.
Cousin, I pray you show us your intent
 In any wise, and not spare.
Cousin. Yea, *Everyman*, and to us declare
 If ye be disposed to go any whither,
 For wete you well, we will live and die together.
Kindred. In wealth and woe we will with you hold,
 For over his kin a man may be bold.
Everyman. Gramercy, my friends and kinsmen kind.
 Now shall I show you the grief of my mind:
 I was commanded by a messenger,

19. *fay*] faith.20. *Sith that*] Since, now that.

That is an high king's chief officer;
 He bade me go a pilgrimage to my pain,
 And I know well I shall never come again;
 Also I must give a reckoning straight,
 For I have a great enemy, that hath me in wait,
 Which intendeth me for to hinder.
Kindred. What account is that which ye must render?
 That would I know.
Everyman. Of all my works I must show
 How I have lived and my days spent;
 Also of ill deeds, that I have used
 In my time, sith life was me lent;
 And of all virtues that I have refused.
 Therefore I pray you go thither with me,
 To help to make mine account, for saint *charity*.
Cousin. What, to go thither? Is that the matter?
 Nay, *Everyman*, I had liefer²¹ fast bread and water
 All this five year and more.
Everyman. Alas, that ever I was bore!²²
 For now shall I never be merry
 If that you forsake me.
Kindred. Ah, sir; what, ye be a merry man!
 Take good heart to you, and make no moan.
 But one thing I warn you, by Saint Anne,
 As for me, ye shall go alone.
Everyman. My *Cousin*, will you not with me go?
Cousin. No, by our Lady; I have the cramp in my toe.
 Trust not to me, for, so God me speed,
 I will deceive you in your most need.
Kindred. It availeth not us to tice.²³
 Ye shall have my maid with all my heart;
 She loveth to go to feasts, there to be nice,
 And to dance, and abroad to start:
 I will give her leave to help you in that journey,
 If that you and she may agree.
Everyman. Now show me the very effect of your mind.
 Will you go with me, or abide behind?
Kindred. Abide behind? yea, that I will and I may!
 Therefore farewell until another day.

21. *had liefer*] would rather.22. *bore*] born.23. *tice*] entice.

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

Cousin. Cousin *Everyman*, farewell now,
For verily I will not go with you;
Also of mine own an unready reckoning
I have to account; therefore I make tarrying.
Now, God keep thee, for now I go.

Everyman. Ah, *Jesus*, is all come hereto?
Lo, fair words maketh fools feign;
They promise and nothing will do certain.
My kinsmen promised me faithfully
For to abide with me steadfastly,
And now fast away do they flee:
Even so *Fellowship* promised me.
What friend were best me of to provide?
I lose my time here longer to abide.
Yet in my mind a thing there is; —
All my life I have loved riches;
If that my good now help me might,
He would make my heart full light.
I will speak to him in this distress. —
Where art thou, my *Goods* and riches?

Goods. Who calleth me? *Everyman*? what haste thou hast!
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,
I cannot stir; in packs low I lie.
What would ye have, lightly²⁴ me say.

Everyman. Come hither, *Good*, in all the haste thou may,
For of counsel I must desire thee.

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

Everyman. It is another disease that grieveth me;
In this world it is not, I tell thee so.
I am sent for another way to go,
To give a straight account general
Before the highest *Jupiter* of all,
And all my life I have had joy and pleasure in thee.

24. *lightly*] quickly.

Therefore I pray thee go with me,
For, peradventure, thou mayst before God Almighty
My reckoning help to clean and purify;
For it is said ever among,
That money maketh all right that is wrong.

Goods. Nay, *Everyman*, I sing another song,
I follow no man in such voyages;
For and I went with thee
Thou shouldst fare much the worse for me;
For because on me thou did set thy mind,
Thy reckoning I have made blotted and blind,
That thine account thou cannot make truly;
And that hast thou for the love of me.

Everyman. That would grieve me full sore,
When I should come to that fearful answer.
Up, let us go thither together.

Goods. Nay, not so, I am too brittle, I may not endure;
I will follow no man one foot, be ye sure.

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

Goods. That is to thy damnation without lesing,²⁵
For my love is contrary to the love everlasting.
But if thou had me loved moderately during,
As, to the poor give part of me,
Then shouldst thou not in this dolour be,
Nor in this great sorrow and care.

Everyman. Lo, now was I deceived or²⁶ I was ware,
And all I may wyte²⁷ my spending of time.

Goods. What, weenest thou that I am thine?

Everyman. I had wend so.

Goods. Nay, *Everyman*, I say no;
As for a while I was lent thee,
A season thou hast had me in prosperity;
My condition is man's soul to kill;
If I save one, a thousand I do spill;
Weenest thou that I will follow thee?
Nay, from this world, not verily.

Everyman. I had wend otherwise.

25. *without lesing*] without lying, i.e. truly.

26. *or*] ere, before.

27. *wyte*] blame.

Goods. Therefore to thy soul *Good* is a thief;
 For when thou art dead, this is my guise²⁸
 Another to deceive in the same wise
 As I have done thee, and all to his soul's reproof.²⁹

Everyman. O false *Good*, cursed thou be!
 Thou traitor to God, that hast deceived me,
 And caught me in thy snare.

Goods. Marry, thou brought thyself in care,
 Whereof I am glad,
 I must needs laugh, I cannot be sad.

Everyman. Ah, *Good*, thou hast had long my hearty love;
 I gave thee that which should be the Lord's above.
 But wilt thou not go with me in deed?
 I pray thee truth to say.

Goods. No, so God me speed,
 Therefore farewell, and have good day.

Everyman. O, to whom shall I make my moan
 For to go with me in that heavy journey?
 First *Fellowship* said he would with me gone;
 His words were very pleasant and gay,
 But afterward he left me alone.
 Then spake I to my kinsmen all in despair,
 And also they gave me words fair,
 They lacked no fair speaking,
 But all forsake me in the ending.
 Then went I to my *Goods* that I loved best,
 In hope to have comfort, but there had I least;
 For my *Goods* sharply did me tell
 That he bringeth many into hell.
 Then of myself I was ashamed,
 And so I am worthy to be blamed;
 Thus may I well myself hate.
 Of whom shall I now counsel take?
 I think that I shall never speed
 Till that I go to my *Good-Deed*,
 But alas, she is so weak,
 That she can neither go nor speak;
 Yet will I venture on her now. —
 My *Good-Deeds*, where be you?

28. *guise*] custom, practice.29. *reproof*] reproach, blame.

Good-Deeds. Here I lie cold in the ground;
 Thy sins hath me sore bound,
 That I cannot stir.

Everyman. O, *Good-Deeds*, I stand in fear;
 I must you pray of counsel,
 For help now should come right well.

Good-Deeds. *Everyman*, I have understanding
 That ye be summoned account to make
 Before *Messias*, of Jerusalem King;
 And you do by me that journey what you will I take.³⁰

Everyman. Therefore I come to you, my moan to make;
 I pray you, that ye will go with me.

Good-Deeds. I would full fain, but I cannot stand verily.

Everyman. Why, is there anything on you fall?³¹

Good-Deeds. Yea, sir, I may thank you of³² all;
 If ye had perfectly cheered me,
 Your book of account now full ready had be.
 Look, the books of your works and deeds eke;³³
 Oh, see how they lie under the feet,
 To your soul's heaviness.

Everyman. Our Lord *Jesus*, help me!
 For one letter here I can not see.

Good-Deeds. There is a blind reckoning in time of distress!

Everyman. *Good-Deeds*, I pray you, help me in this need,
 Or else I am for ever damned indeed;
 Therefore help me to make reckoning
 Before the redeemer of all thing,
 That king is, and was, and ever shall.

Good-Deeds. *Everyman*, I am sorry of your fall,
 And fain would I help you, and I were able.

Everyman. *Good-Deeds*, your counsel I pray you give me.

Good-Deeds. That shall I do verily;
 Though that on my feet I may not go,
 I have a sister, that shall with you also,
 Called *Knowledge*, which shall with you abide,
 To help you to make that dreadful reckoning.

Knowledge. *Everyman*, I will go with thee, and be thy guide,
 In thy most need to go by thy side.

30. *And you . . . I take.*] If you do as I say, I will take that journey with you.31. *fall*] befallen.32. *of*] for.33. *eke*] also.

Everyman. In good condition I am now in every thing,
And am wholly content with this good thing;
Thanked be God my Creator.

Good-Deeds. And when he hath brought thee there,
Where thou shalt heal thee of thy smart,
Then go you with your reckoning and your *Good-Deeds* together
For to make you joyful at heart
Before the blessed Trinity.

Everyman. My *Good-Deeds*, gramercy;
I am well content, certainly,
With your words sweet.

Knowledge. Now go we together lovingly,
To *Confession*, that cleansing river.

Everyman. For joy I weep; I would we were there;
But, I pray you, give me cognition
Where dwelleth that holy man, *Confession*.

Knowledge. In the house of salvation:
We shall find him in that place,
That shall us comfort by God's grace.
Lo, this is *Confession*; kneel down and ask mercy,
For he is in good conceit³⁴ with God almighty.

Everyman. O glorious fountain that all uncleanness doth clarify,
Wash from me the spots of vices unclean,
That on me no sin may be seen;
I come with *Knowledge* for my redemption,
Repent with hearty and full contrition;
For I am commanded a pilgrimage to take,
And great accounts before God to make.
Now, I pray you, *Shrift*, mother of salvation,
Help my good deeds for my piteous exclamation.

Confession. I know your sorrow well, *Everyman*;
Because with *Knowledge* ye come to me,
I will you comfort as well as I can,
And a precious jewel I will give thee,
Called penance, wise voider of adversity;
Therewith shall your body chastised be,
With abstinence and perseverance in God's service:
Here shall you receive that scourge of me,
Which is penance strong, that ye must endure,
To remember thy Saviour was scourged for thee
With sharp scourges, and suffered it patiently;

34. *good conceit*] favorable opinion, i.e., highly esteemed by.

So must thou, or thou scape that painful pilgrimage;
Knowledge, keep him in this voyage,
And by that time *Good-Deeds* will be with thee.
But in any wise, be sure of mercy,
For your time draweth fast, and ye will saved be;
Ask God mercy, and He will grant truly,
When with the scourge of penance man doth him bind,
The oil of forgiveness then shall he find.

Everyman. Thanked be God for his gracious work!
For now I will my penance begin;
This hath rejoiced and lighted my heart,
Though the knots be painful and hard within.

Knowledge. *Everyman*, look your penance that ye fulfil,
What pain that ever it to you be,
And *Knowledge* shall give you counsel at will,
How your accounts ye shall make clearly.

Everyman. O eternal God, O heavenly figure,
O way of rightwiseness, O goodly vision,
Which descended down in a virgin pure
Because he would *Everyman* redeem,
Which *Adam* forfeited by his disobedience:
O blessed Godhead, elect and high-divine,
Forgive my grievous offence;
Here I cry thee mercy in this presence.
O ghostly treasure, O ransomer and redeemer
Of all the world, hope and conductor,
Mirror of joy, and founder of mercy,
Which illumineth heaven and earth thereby,
Hear my clamorous complaint, though it late be;
Receive my prayers; unworthy in this heavy life,
Though I be, a sinner most abominable,
Yet let my name be written in *Moses'* table;
O *Mary*, pray to the Maker of all thing,
Me for to help at my ending,
And save me from the power of my enemy,
For *Death* assaileth me strongly;
And, Lady, that I may by means of thy prayer
Of your Son's glory to be partaker,
By the means of his passion I it crave,
I beseech you, help my soul to save. —
Knowledge, give me the scourge of penance;
My flesh therewith shall give a quittance:
I will now begin, if God give me grace.

Knowledge. Everyman, God give you time and space:
Thus I bequeath you in the hands of our Saviour,
Thus may you make your reckoning sure.

Everyman. In the name of the Holy Trinity,
My body sore³⁵ punished shall be:
Take this body for the sin of the flesh;
Also thou delightest to go gay and fresh,
And in the way of damnation thou did me bring;
Therefore suffer now strokes and punishing.
Now of penance I will wade the water clear,
To save me from purgatory, that sharp fire.

Good-Deeds. I thank God; now I can walk and go;
And am delivered of my sickness and woe.
Therefore with *Everyman* I will go, and not spare;
His good works I will help him to declare.

Knowledge. Now, *Everyman*, be merry and glad;
Your *Good-Deeds* cometh now; ye may not be sad;
Now is your *Good-Deeds* whole and sound,
Going upright upon the ground.

Everyman. My heart is light, and shall be evermore;
Now will I smite faster than I did before.

Good-Deeds. *Everyman*, pilgrim, my special friend,
Blessed be thou without end;
For thee is prepared the eternal glory.
Ye have me made whole and sound,
Therefore I will bide by thee in every stound.³⁶

Everyman. Welcome, my *Good-Deeds*; now I hear thy voice,
I weep for very sweetness of love.

Knowledge. Be no more sad, but ever rejoice,
God seeth thy living in his throne above;
Put on this garment to thy behove,³⁷
Which is wet with your tears,
Or else before God you may it miss,
When you to your journey's end come shall.

Everyman. Gentle *Knowledge*, what do you it call?
Knowledge. It is a garment of sorrow:
From pain it will you borrow;
Contrition it is,
That getteth forgiveness;
It pleaseth God passing well.

35. sore] grievously.

36. stound] season.

37. behove] advantage.

Good-Deeds. *Everyman*, will you wear it for your heal?
Everyman. Now blessed be *Jesu*, *Mary's* Son!
For now have I on true contrition.
And let us go now without tarrying;
Good-Deeds, have we clear our reckoning?

Good-Deeds. Yea, indeed I have it here.

Everyman. Then I trust we need not fear;
Now, friends, let us not part in twain.³⁸

Knowledge. Nay, *Everyman*, that will we not, certain.

Good-Deeds. Yet must thou lead with thee
Three persons of great might.

Everyman. Who should they be?

Good-Deeds. *Discretion* and *Strength* they hight,³⁹
And thy *Beauty* may not abide behind.

Knowledge. Also ye must call to mind
Your *Five-wits* as for your counsellors.

Good-Deeds. You must have them ready at all hours.

Everyman. How shall I get them hither?

Knowledge. You must call them all together,
And they will hear you incontinent.⁴⁰

Everyman. My friends, come hither and be present
Discretion, *Strength*, my *Five-wits*, and *Beauty*.

Beauty. Here at your will we be all ready.
What will ye that we should do?

Good-Deeds. That ye would with *Everyman* go,
And help him in his pilgrimage,
Advise you, will ye with him or not in that voyage?

Strength. We will bring him all thither,
To his help and comfort, ye may believe me.

Discretion. So will we go with him all together.

Everyman. Almighty God, loved thou be,
I give thee laud that I have hither brought
Strength, *Discretion*, *Beauty*, and *Five-wits*; lack I nought;
And my *Good-Deeds*, with *Knowledge* clear,
All be in my company at my will here;
I desire no more to my business.

Strength. And I, *Strength*, will by you stand in distress,
Though thou would in battle fight on the ground.

38. twain] two.

39. hight] are called, named.

40. incontinent] immediately.

Five-wits. And though it were through the world round,
We will not depart for sweet nor sour.

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

Discretion. *Everyman*, advise you first of all;
Go with a good advisement and deliberation;
We all give you virtuous monition⁴¹
That all shall be well.

Everyman. My friends, hearken what I will tell:
I pray God reward you in his heavenly sphere.
Now hearken, all that be here,
For I will make my testament
Here before you all present.
In alms half my good I will give with my hands twain
In the way of charity, with good intent,
And the other half still shall remain
In quiet to be returned there it ought to be.
This I do in despite of the fiend of hell
To go quite out of his peril
Ever after and this day.

Knowledge. *Everyman*, hearken what I say;
Go to priesthood, I you advise,
And receive of him in any wise
The holy sacrament and ointment together;
Then shortly see ye turn again hither;
We will all abide you here.

Five-Wits. Yea, *Everyman*, hie you that ye ready were,
There is no emperor, king, duke, ne baron,
That of God hath commission,
As hath the least priest in the world being;
For of the blessed sacraments pure and benign,
He beareth the keys and thereof hath the cure
For man's redemption, it is ever sure;
Which God for our soul's medicine
Gave us out of his heart with great pine;
Here in this transitory life, for thee and me
The blessed sacraments seven there be,
Baptism, confirmation, with priesthood good,
And the sacrament of God's precious flesh and blood,
Marriage, the holy extreme unction, and penance;

41. *monition*] warning.

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

Everyman. Fain would I receive that holy body
And meekly to my ghostly father I will go.

Five-wits. *Everyman*, that is the best that ye can do:
God will you to salvation bring,
For priesthood exceedeth all other thing;
To us Holy Scripture they do teach,
And converteth man from sin heaven to reach;
God hath to them more power given,
Than to any angel that is in heaven;
With five words he may consecrate
God's body in flesh and blood to make,
And handleth his maker between his hands;
The priest bindeth and unbindeth all bands,
Both in earth and in heaven;
Thou ministers all the sacraments seven;
Though we kissed thy feet thou were worthy;
Thou art surgeon that cureth sin deadly:
No remedy we find under God
But all only priesthood.

Everyman, God gave priests that dignity,
And setteth them in his stead among us to be;
Thus be they above angels in degree.

Knowledge. If priests be good it is so surely;
But when Jesus hanged on the cross with great smart
There he gave, out of his blessed heart,
The same sacrament in great torment:
He sold them not to us, that Lord Omnipotent.
Therefore Saint Peter the apostle doth say
That Jesu's curse hath all they
Which God their Saviour do buy or sell,
Or they for any money do take or tell.
Sinful priests giveth the sinners example bad;
Their children sitteth by other men's fires, I have heard;
And some haunteth women's company,
With unclean life, as lusts of lechery:
These be with sin made blind.

Five-wits. I trust to God no such may we find;
Therefore let us priesthood honour,
And follow their doctrine for our souls' succour;
We be their sheep, and they shepherds be
By whom we all be kept in surety.

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

Good-Deeds. Methinketh it is he indeed.

Everyman. Now Jesu be our alder speed.⁴²

I have received the sacrament for my redemption,
And then mine extreme unction:
Blessed be all they that counselled me to take it!
And now, friends, let us go without longer respite;
I thank God that ye have tarried so long.
Now set each of you on this rod your hand,
And shortly follow me:

I go before, there I would be; God be our guide.

Strength. *Everyman*, we will not from you go,
Till ye have gone this voyage long.

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

Knowledge. And though this pilgrimage be never so strong,

I will never part you fro:

Everyman, I will be as sure by thee
As ever I did by Judas Maccabee.

Everyman. Alas, I am so faint I may not stand,

My limbs under me do fold;
Friends, let us not turn again to this land,
Not for all the world's gold,
For into this cave must I creep
And turn to the earth and there to sleep.

Beauty. What, into this grave? alas!

Everyman. Yea, there shall you consume⁴³ more and less.

Beauty. And what, should I smother here?

Everyman. 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.

Beauty. I cross out all this; adieu by Saint *John*;

I take my cap in my lap and am gone.

Everyman. What, *Beauty*, whither will ye?

Beauty. Peace, I am deaf; I look not behind me,
Not and thou would give me all the gold in thy chest.

Everyman. Alas, whereto may I trust?

Beauty goeth fast away hie;
She promised with me to live and die.

42. Now . . . speed.] May Jesus be the helper of all.

43. consume] decay.

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

Everyman. Why, then ye will forsake me all.

Sweet *Strength*, tarry a little space.

Strength. Nay, sir, by the rood⁴⁴ of grace

I will hie me from thee fast,
Though thou weep till thy heart brast.⁴⁵

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

Strength. Yea, I have you far enough conveyed;

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

Everyman. *Strength*, you to displease I am to blame;

Will you break promise that is debt?

Strength. In faith, I care not;

Thou art but a fool to complain,
You spend your speech and waste your brain;
Go thrust thee into the ground.

Everyman. I had wend surer I should you have found.

He that trusteth in his *Strength*
She him deceiveth at the length.
Both *Strength* and *Beauty* forsaketh me,
Yet they promised me fair and lovingly.

Discretion. *Everyman*, I will after *Strength* be gone,

As for me I will leave you alone.

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

Discretion. Yea, in faith, I will go from thee,

For when *Strength* goeth before
I follow after evermore.

Everyman. Yet, I pray thee, for the love of the Trinity,

Look in my grave once piteously.

Discretion. Nay, so nigh will I not come.

Farewell, every one!

Everyman. O all thing faileth, save God alone;

Beauty, *Strength*, and *Discretion*;
For when *Death* bloweth his blast,
They all run from me full fast.

Five-wits. *Everyman*, my leave now of thee I take;

I will follow the other, for here I thee forsake.

44. rood] cross.

45. brast] break.

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

Five-wits. I will no longer thee keep;
Now farewell, and there an end.

Everyman. O Jesu, help, all hath forsaken me!

Good-Deeds. Nay, *Everyman*, I will bide with thee,
I will not forsake thee indeed;
Thou shalt find me a good friend at need.

Everyman. Gramercy, *Good-Deeds*; now may I true friends see;
They have forsaken me every one;
I loved them better than my *Good-Deeds* alone.

Knowledge, will ye forsake me also?

Knowledge. Yea, *Everyman*, when ye to death do go:
But not yet for no manner of danger.

Everyman. Gramercy, *Knowledge*, with all my heart.

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

Everyman. Methinketh, alas, that I must be gone,
To make my reckoning and my debts pay,
For I see my time is nigh spent away.
Take example, all ye that this do hear or see,
How they that I loved best do forsake me,
Except my *Good-Deeds* that bideth truly.

Good-Deeds. All earthly things is but vanity:
Beauty, *Strength*, and *Discretion*, do man forsake,
Foolish friends and kinsmen, that fair spake,
All fleeth save *Good-Deeds*, and that am I.

Everyman. Have mercy on me, God most mighty;
And stand by me, thou Mother and Maid, holy *Mary*.

Good-Deeds. Fear not, I will speak for thee.

Everyman. Here I cry God mercy.

Good-Deeds. Short our end, and minish⁴⁶ our pain;
Let us go and never come again.

Everyman. Into thy hands, Lord, my soul I commend;
Receive it, Lord, that it be not lost;
As thou me boughtest, so me defend,
And save me from the fiend's boast,
That I may appear with that blessed host
That shall be saved at the day of doom.

46. *minish*] diminish.

*In manus tuas*⁴⁷ — of might's most
For ever — *commendo spiritum meum*.⁴⁸

Knowledge. Now hath he suffered that we all shall endure;
The *Good-Deeds* shall make all sure.
Now hath he made ending;
Methinketh that I hear angels sing
And make great joy and melody,
Where *Everyman's* soul received shall be.

Angel. Come, excellent elect spouse to Jesu:
Hereabove thou shalt go
Because of thy singular virtue:
Now the soul is taken the body fro;
Thy reckoning is crystal-clear.
Now shalt thou into the heavenly sphere,
Unto the which all ye shall come
That liveth well before the day of doom.

Doctor. This moral men may have in mind;
Ye hearers, take it of worth, old and young,
And forsake pride, for he deceiveth you in the end,
And remember *Beauty*, *Five-wits*, *Strength*, and *Discretion*,
They all at the last do *Everyman* forsake,
Save his *Good-Deeds*, there doth he take.
But beware, and they be small
Before God, he hath no help at all.
None excuse may be there for *Everyman*:
Alas, how shall he do then?
For after death amends may no man make,
For then mercy and pity do him forsake.
If his reckoning be not clear when he do come,
God will say — *ite maledicti in ignem æternum*.⁴⁹
And he that hath his account whole and sound,
High in heaven he shall be crowned;
Unto which place God bring us all thither
That we may live body and soul together.
Thereto help the Trinity,
Amen, say ye, for saint *Charity*.

THUS ENDETH THIS MORALL PLAY OF EVERYMAN.

47. *In manus tuas*] "Into thy hands."48. *commendo spiritum meum*.] I commend my spirit.49. *ite . . . æternum*] "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire" (Matthew 25:41).