

Poetry and its Language

Papers in Honour of Teresa Bela

Edited by Marta Gibińska and Władysław Witalisz

5

Text – Meaning – Context:

Cracow Studies in English Language,
Literature and Culture

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Preface

A graduate of the Institute of English Philology at the Jagiellonian University, Teresa Bela has been an integral part of the Institute throughout her entire career, which has spanned more than forty years. She began working at the Institute in 1970, during a rather bleak period for English Studies in Poland. Conditions in those days were far from conducive to doing research in this field, as the political system did not encourage interest in Western countries. Contact with Great Britain and the United States was limited, and travelling from Poland into Western Europe was both difficult and prohibitively expensive. However, by far the greatest impediment to any scholarly endeavour was the fact that English-language academic books and journals were scarce and very difficult to obtain.

In spite of these challenges and the obligations that came with raising a family, Teresa persisted in her academic pursuits and completed her much-lauded doctoral dissertation entitled *C.S. Lewis as a Critic of the Renaissance*, written under the supervision of Professor Przemysław Mroczkowski, which she defended in October 1978. Some of the research needed for the completion of this project had been made possible by a scholarship to Oxford University, awarded to her in 1976.

While working on her doctorate, Teresa taught full-time at the Institute, offering survey courses in the history of English literature, classes in literary theory, and practical English language courses, such as phonetics or conversation. Early on, students recognized that she was a very helpful teacher whose enthusiasm for English literature was truly inspiring, a gift that has been enjoyed by successive generations of students. In the later stages of her career, in addition to teaching survey courses in English literature, she offered specialized courses in English poetry and conducted MA seminars. More than one hundred students graduated from the Institute after having completed an MA thesis under her supervision.

In the late 1970s, Teresa Bela was a member of the team who, under the guidance of Professor Jerzy Strzetelski, prepared several textbooks and compiled readers for students of English. Such materials were essential, as they provided students with otherwise inaccessible readings needed for the completion of their courses.

In the years 1981-84 Teresa served as the head of the English and American Literature Section (Zakład Historii Literatury Angielskiej i Amerykańskiej). She was at the helm during a particularly stormy period – the Institute was understaffed, several teachers were on sick leave, and the British Council was temporarily unable to provide their usual lecturer. The remaining members of the faculty had to teach additional courses and take on more than the usual load of administrative duties. Teresa's hard work, as well as her gift for leadership, grounded in establishing good interpersonal relations combined with the constant support she has always generously offered to others, guided the Section into calmer waters.

Teresa Bela was deeply involved in the organizational and administrative work at the Institute throughout her entire career. She served two terms as the Deputy Director of the Institute during the years 1996-2002. In the years 1995-2012 she

was either the Head or Vice-Head of the History of English and American Literature section, alternately with Prof. Marta Gibińska.

Teresa has contributed immensely all through her career to the establishment of links between the Institute and the English departments of many universities abroad. She was instrumental in maintaining the exchange programmes with the universities of Kent, Sheffield, Bochum and Nijmegen. She has made numerous visits to foreign universities, both to the East and to the West of Poland, for conferences, research, or visiting professorships, always with an eye to developing and strengthening the Institute's international connections.

For many years, she was actively engaged in the organization of the international conference on English and American Studies held every three years at the Institute, known as "April Conference". In the days of the Iron Curtain, events like the April Conference were extremely important in providing a venue for an exchange of academic and critical ideas between the scholars from the East and the West. Naturally, the organization of international conferences during those times was fraught with peculiar obstacles and difficulties. However, Teresa always tackled these challenges with infinite patience, tact, dedication, and inventiveness.

For her post-doctoral research, Teresa turned to the cultural and political aspects of Renaissance poetry. She conducted her research during several visits to universities abroad, including the University of Oxford, Ruhr-Universität Bochum, the University of St. Andrews, as well as the University of Kent at Canterbury and the University of Nijmegen. The resulting book, *The Image of the Queen in Elizabethan Poetry*, was published in 1994.

Teresa has also published a number of articles on Elizabethan and Jacobean poetry, analysing the work of – among others – George Gascoigne, John Davies, and John Lyly. She has always been interested in religious poetry and her publications in the field include articles on George Herbert and William Cowper, as well as on R.S. Thomas.

While still a student at the Institute, Teresa was interested in medieval English literature, and she completed her MA thesis on morality plays. She revisited her early fascination with the Middle Ages in her later career by devoting scholarly articles to the poetry of William Langland and Geoffrey Chaucer.

Teresa's publications reflect her long-standing interest in culture and the history of ideas. She has published several articles examining the critical output of C. S. Lewis. She has written about metaphysical poets, about S. T. Coleridge, but also on a contemporary novelist – Piers Paul Read. Her scholarship is internationally recognized, as her articles have been published in various European countries as well as in the United States of America.

Between the years 1983 and 2006, Teresa co-edited six volumes of articles that were selected from the papers originally presented at the triennial April Conference. She was also the co-editor of a volume of articles published in 1998, devoted to the work of Professor Roman Dyboski, the founding father of English studies in Poland.

To many students of English literature, not only in Kraków, but also at other Polish universities, she is known as the co-author and editor of the *College Anthology of English Literature*, a popular textbook that combines an anthology of readings selected from English literature with critical introductions (first published in 1997, with a revised edition published in 2008).

Teresa's interests are not limited to English literature. She has studied the reception of Polish poetry in the English-speaking world, and she is also the author of insightful articles on Polish poetry, especially on two women poets of the 20th century: Anna Świrszczyńska and Wisława Szymborska. Written in English, these articles have certainly helped to deepen the interest in Polish literature and to increase the appreciation of Polish poetry outside Poland.

Apart from producing a sizeable collection of papers, Teresa participated actively in the international academic community by giving presentations at many conferences both in Poland and abroad. She was one of the founders and active members of the Polish Association for the Study of English (PASE). She has reviewed a large number of doctoral and habilitation dissertations. She has also supervised her own doctoral students and was the director of five doctoral dissertations.

Writing this note as both a colleague and a friend of Teresa, I realize that I will never be able to do justice to her role at the Institute just by enumerating her academic and administrative achievements, for apart from these accomplishments she has also provided the kind of input that cannot easily be quantified. To her colleagues in the department, Teresa has always been the person who can be relied on to extend a helping hand, solve problems, and soothe conflicts. She never shies away from hard work, however tedious, and is always dependable and conscientious. Most importantly, she has always worked disinterestedly for the public good, often placing the needs of others above her own. Many people have benefited from her wisdom and fair-mindedness, as well as from her compassionate and kind-hearted nature. I am sure I speak for all my colleagues at the Institute when I express our heartfelt gratitude to Teresa for being with us all these years.

Zygmunt Mazur, Jagiellonian University

Teresa Bela's Selected Publications

Monographs:

1994 *The Image of the Queen in Elizabethan Poetry*. Kraków: Uniwersytet Jagielloński.

Chapters in books:

1979 J. Strzetelski, T. Bela et al. *The Study of the Literary Work of Art*. Kraków: Uniwersytet Jagielloński, 83-104.

1984 J. Strzetelski, T. Bela et al. *Historia Literatury Angielskiej: Tablice Chronologiczne*. Warszawa: Państwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, 15-29, 94-95.

Books edited:

1997 *New Developments in English and American Studies. Continuity and Change*. Eds. Marta Gibińska, Zygmunt Mazur, and Teresa Bela. Jagiellonian University Institute of English Philology. Kraków: Universitas.

1998 *Professor Roman Dyboski: Founder of English Studies in Poland*. Eds. T. Bela, E. Mańczak-Wohlfeld. Universitas: Kraków 1998.

1999 *Tradition and Postmodernity: English and American Studies and the Challenge of the Future*. Eds. Teresa Bela i Zygmunt Mazur. Kraków: Universitas.

2003 *The Legacy of History: English and American Studies and the Significance of the Past*, vol. 1: *Literature*, ed. Teresa Bela & Zygmunt Mazur. Kraków: Jagiellonian University Press.

2006 *Language and Identity: English and American Studies in the Age of Globalization. Proceedings of the X International April Conference*. Eds. Teresa Bela & Zygmunt Mazur. Kraków: Instytut Filologii Angielskiej, UJ.

2008 *The College Anthology of English Literature*, Revised Edition. Ed. T. Bela and Z. Mazur. Kraków: Universitas.

Articles:

1972 "The Use of Alliteration and the Device of Verbal Repetition in Langland's 'Confession of the Seven Deadly Sins'", *Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego*, Prace Historycznoliterackie, Z. 24, Kraków, 9-21.

1975 "W kręgu idei literaturoznawczych George'a Watsona". *Zagadnienia Rodzajów Literackich*, Z. XVII/1, Łódź, 93-101.

1981 "The Critical Principles of C. S. Lewis", *Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego*. Prace Historycznoliterackie, Z. 42, Kraków, 69-83.

- 1985 "The Friar's Tale' Reconsidered", *Litterae et Lingua*, Prace Komisji Historycznoliterackiej PAN nr 44, Kraków, 51-55.
- 1990 "Palm Sunday Ceremonies in Poland: The Past and the Present", *The Early Drama, Art, and Music Review*, Vol. 12, no. 2, Medieval Institute Publications, Western Michigan University: Kalamazoo, 25-31.
- 1992 "Sir John Davies and the Idea of Praise", *Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego*, Prace Historycznoliterackie, Z. 80, Kraków, 25-36.
- 1993 "Queen Elizabeth as a Poetess", *Zeszyty Naukowe Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego*, Prace Historycznoliterackie, Z. 82, Kraków, 61-69.
- 1999 "The Knight and His Queen: Poetry and Politics in the Life of George Gascoigne", *PASE Papers in Literature*, Wydawnictwo Naukowe "Śląsk": Katowice, 9-30.
- 1999 "Angel Day's Version of *Daphnis and Chloe*", *Elizabethan Literature and Transformation*, ed. Sabine Coelsch-Foisner, Stauffenburg Verlag: Salzburg, 19-30.
- 2000 "'The Queen Is Dead, Long Live the Queen': Eulogy and Nostalgia in Jacobean Literature", *Le Debuts de Siecles*, ed. Terence McCarthy, UFR Langues et Communication: Dijon, 19-48.
- 2000 "The Transformation of the Myth in John Lyly's *Endimion*", *Prace Komisji Neofilologicznej*, Tom I, Polska Akademia Umiejętności: Kraków, 77-87.
- 2002 "Obraz Męki Pańskiej w angielskiej poezji metafizycznej", *Prace Komisji Neofilologicznej*, Tom III, Polska Akademia Umiejętności: Kraków 2002, 39-58.
- 2004 "Priests at Prayer: Some Reflections on the *Poetry* of George Herbert and Ronald Stuart Thomas". *British and American Studies*, Vol. X, Timisoara University Press: Timisoara, 85-96.
- 2004 "John Lyly's *Campaspe*: Between the Interlude and the Moral Play", *Ways of Looking at a Blackbird: Essays in British and American Literature and Studies in Honour of Professor Irena Przemeczka*, ed. Grażyna and Andrzej Branny. Kraków: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 37-44.
- 2004 "Modlitwa duchownych: refleksje o poezji G. Herberta i R. S. Thomasa", *Prace Komisji Neofilologicznej*, Tom IV, Kraków: Polska Akademia Umiejętności, 93-108.
- 2005 "C. S. Lewis as a Critic of Romanticism", *British and American Studies*, Vol. XI, Timisoara: Timisoara University Press, 177-186.
- 2005 "Queen-Elizabeth, the Renaissance and the New Historicism", *PASE Papers in Literature, Language and Culture*, ed. G. Bystydzieńska, E. Harris, P. Lyons. Warszawa: Uniwersytet Warszawski, 14-22.
- 2005 "T. S. Coleridge's Reading of Metaphysical Poets", *Filled with Many-Splendored Words: Papers on Culture, Language, and Literature in Honour of Prof. Dr. Fritz*

- Hans Koenig*, ed. A. Witalisz, D. Jandl, K. Odwarka, H.D. Pohl and W. Witalisz, *Prace Naukowo-Dydaktyczne PWSZ w Krosnie, Zeszyt 13*, Krosno, 25-32.
- 2006 "Piers Paul Read as a Novelist: Variety in Unity". *Studia Litteraria Universitatis Jagellonicae Cracoviensis* 1, Kraków: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Jagiellońskiego, 9-20.
- 2006 "The Round Table Discussion: American Studies in Eastern and Central Europe". *American Studies: Yearbook 2004-5: Europe and the United States of America: Redefining Each Other*. Ed. by Yuri V. Stulov. Minsk: Propilei, 405-407.
- 2007 "Building the Barricade: Anna Swir's Lyrical Epos of the Warsaw Uprising of 1944". *Cognition in Language: Volume in Honour of Professor Elżbieta Tabakowska*, ed. W. Chłopiczki, A. Pawelec, A. Pokojka. Kraków: Tertium, 432-446.
- 2007 "Between English and Welsh: R. S. Thomas and His Prose and Verse Autobiographies", *Culture, Language and Literature in European and World Border Regions*, ed. W. Witalisz and D. Rygiel. Tom 2, Krosno: Państwowa Wyższa Szkoła Zawodowa, 197-204.
- 2008 "Images of Love, Womanhood and Childhood in the Poems by Anna Swir and Wisława Szymborska". *Armenian Folia Anglistica: International Journal of English Studies*. Armenian Association for the Study of English 1(5), Yerevan, 80-101.
- 2008 "Narrative Technique in the Early Novels of Piers Paul Read", *British and American Studies*, Vol. XIV, Timisoara: Timisoara University Press, 161-170.
- 2008 "The Image of War in the Eyes of a Civilian; Anna Swir's Poetry about the Warsaw Uprising of 1944", *Tekstai in Kontekstai: Transformaciju Sklada*, Vilnius: Vilnius University Press, 172-183.
- 2009 "Poetic Perspectives on Social and Cultural Themes: Women, Love and Children in Selected Poems by Polish Women Poets in English Translation", *Cultural Intersections: Dialogue and Exchange in Language Studies*, ed. Christopher Brighton and Jack Lala, Tarnów: Państwowa Wyższa Szkoła Zawodowa, 21-40.
- 2009 "Clive Staples Lewis jako mediewista i badacz Renesansu", *Prace Komisji Neofilologicznej*, Tom VIII, Kraków: Polska Akademia Umiejętności, 7-20.
- 2010 "William Cooper as a Religious Poet". *From Queen Anne to Queen Victoria. Readings in 18th and 19th century British literature and culture*. Vol. 2, ed. G. Bystydzieńska, E. Harris. Warszawa: Uniwersytet Warszawski, Ośrodek Studiów Brytyjskich, 35-46.
- 2011 "Faith, Doubt and Despair in William Cowper's Selected Poetry and Prose", *Beyond Sounds and Words: Volume in Honour of Janina Aniela Ozga*, ed. Anna Niżegorodcew and Maria Jodłowiec, Kraków: Jagiellonian University Press, 77-90.

Some Thoughts on the Language of Devotion at the Edges of the Canon

Terence McCarthy
University of Burgundy

I begin with *Everyman* – a strange point of departure, perhaps, for an essay in a volume dedicated to poetry and its language. But we must recall that this “treatise...in manner of a moral play”¹ is written in verse. Doctrinal and theatrical matters may call for our attention first, but there will always be time to examine the writer as a poet. No one ever has to apologise, after all, for discussing the poetry of Shakespeare’s plays. In any case, my remarks on *Everyman* will lead me elsewhere, to the edges of the canon and back.

In our university courses, *Everyman* finds its proper place in a survey of early drama and, consequently, its theological content may frequently be undervalued. I shall return to this. For the moment, it is sufficient to suggest that *Everyman* is not in itself a remarkable piece of theatre, although there are perhaps too many unknown factors for it to be given a fair assessment. There are no records of any performances and the text of the play provides scant information about how it was staged – if it ever was. An occasional reference (such as “Whither art thou going/ thus gaily”, 85-6; “Thee availeth not to cry, weep, and pray”, 140; or “I must needs laugh, I cannot be sad”, 456) gives some indication to the director how to advise his actors. But there are fewer than twenty of these and they offer little information, apart from a brief indication of movement of some sort. Many readers feel that the play is sadly static, that the characters come on and make their speeches, but that the text as we have it contains little in the way of dramatic presentation and precious little characterisation. “I have the cramp in my toe” (356), says Cousin, while *Everyman*’s lack of good deeds suggests the infirmity of the character of that name. But apart from these frequently quoted examples, there is not much else. Modern directors can do more or less what they like².

We should of course hesitate to make hasty remarks about the relative incompetence of the writer’s theatrical art. However poor the work might seem to us as a play, we must not forget that we now have centuries of theatrical masterpieces with which to compare it. The author of *Everyman* was handling a genre which was relatively new and his audience was presumably made up of

1 References to *Everyman* are given by simple line-number in the text. These words are taken from the unnumbered lines (1 and 3-4) of the subtitle or introduction to the play. I wish to thank my friend and former colleague, Margaret Tomarchio, for her careful reading of this essay and for suggesting improvements.

2 Not that the play is often performed. Indeed, its rare appearances in the theatre hardly suggest theatrical greatness.

simple folk – little in the text suggests a sophisticated or learned public. We can presume that they did not often have the opportunity to watch theatrical entertainments. Their expectations were presumably modest and their theatregoing experience slight. If *Everyman* reads like an amateur rather than a professional play, it is because that is what it is. Professional theatre did not really exist as yet.

In such circumstances we are all, perhaps, easily pleased and quickly captivated. Even today, in remote rural areas, youngsters eagerly look forward from one year to the next to the annual village fête, while visitors passing through from the city look on in amazement at the poverty of it all and stifle a yawn. Half a century ago, small-town repertory theatres were usually of a standard that would hardly have satisfied West-End audiences, and we occasionally see, on television or in Arts Cinemas, early silent films which, in comparison with what is produced today, seem primitive and incompetent. For some, of course, that is their charm. Back in the 1920s, however, such films had audiences flocking to the new Picture Palaces to revel in a world of unimaginable glamour. The sheer novelty of a work like *Everyman* was presumably quite enough then for it to have a considerable theatrical impact. But the same can hardly be said of the writer's contribution as a poet. And, in this, it cannot be claimed that the literary past offered little as an example by which to set standards.

The basic problem with *Everyman* is that though the urgency of the narrative itself has a certain impact and calls on some of our most basic sentiments and fears, the overall effect hardly seems to derive from any literary excellence in the text. The writing is laboured and pedestrian: the author limps his way through a text strewn with tags, clichés, ready-made expressions, tortuous word-order, and scarcely competent rhymes.

I agree: such features are frequently found in the literature of the period. There was still much of what amounted more or less to oral composition. Texts were produced with a limited quantity of preliminary rough drafting: writers composed almost as they went along. Much of the "writing" must have been done, not only without revision but even without "writing" as such. Foul papers were few and even, at times perhaps, non-existent. Consequently, stock phrases and expressions were a godsend.

What's more, an audience would be unlikely to object. When a text is to be listened to and picked up immediately on the ear, complexity and density are not necessarily virtues. Keats advised Shelley to "load every rift... with ore" (Gittings 390); one could almost say that medieval poetry has to be the poetry of unloaded rifts. I am of course exaggerating: Chaucer's poetry and *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, for example, have their share of tags, set phrases, and expressions that pad out a line more than they add to its meaning, but such features appear in works which are rich in their verbal invention. My objection to *Everyman* is that, on the whole, the surrounding text is rather thin.

T.S. Eliot, for one, would seem to disagree: he speaks approvingly of the play and says “it is a relief to turn back to the austere, close language of *Everyman*” (Eliot 91). But Eliot is comparing the austerity and closeness of the earlier play to the bombast and rhetoric of certain Elizabethan dramatists. In comparison, *Everyman* is indeed spare and restrained; but in comparison with the rich fabric of *Troilus and Criseyde* or *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*, its language is, I suggest, surprisingly threadbare.

On top of this, the writer makes no particular effort even when he brings God on stage. While Medieval painters used quantities of gold paint and gold leaf to portray the divine glory, the author of *Everyman* is not even able to manage a high style for his Maker. It is surely no easy task to portray the divinity on stage, but a God who has to draw attention to his own majesty (22) is unlikely to fill us with awe, and when the poet proves unable to pad out his lines in a more appropriate manner, it is not easy to conceal a smile:

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* (31-34, italics mine).

Surely, the author might have realised that if there is anyone in Creation who does not need to assure us that He is telling the truth it is God.

It would also be unwise to refer to the playwright’s skill with metrical composition. He makes an attempt at the beginning of the text, but soon gives up. The play is opened by a messenger in a twenty-one line speech consisting of seven couplets with each one followed by a single line and all with the same rhyme, used seven times over – *play, day, away, gay, clay, may, say*. This could have made an elegant beginning, particularly since every third line, except the last of the seven, is shorter than the lines of the couplets. The lines are not of the same length, however, nor are those of the couplets. We can argue that an effort of some sort is under way, but perhaps we should not be too demanding.

Things change when God arrives. He uses crossed rhymes – abab, cdcd, etc – except that the “d” rhymes are imperfect (“mind” and “died”). The writer repairs matters at once: in the next three lines – rhymed ede – the “d” rhyme (“enied”) picks up from the earlier “died”. A rhyme scheme requiring twelve lines is squeezed into eleven.

We then have a couplet, followed by four lines with crossed rhymes. For the rest of the speech, God seems to make things easier for Himself (and the author) by speaking in couplets. The bulk of the play is, similarly, in couplets but at times, albeit for no apparent reason, the author moves, very briefly, to cross rhymes (657-60 or 675-678, for example) before returning to couplets. At times, though not often, the rhyme disappears entirely. With a more competent writer, one might be tempted to find an explanation, to say that this happens at moments of strong

emotion³, which is arguably the case in lines 131-3 or 171-2. And yet, however much we might want to give the author the benefit of the doubt, his use of a single missed rhyme now and then – for no apparent reason – is hard to justify. He simply starts rhyming again when he can put an easier word in final position. It is all rather rough and ready, as is the length of the lines throughout. The number of syllables varies, but for no obvious reason as far as I can see⁴.

Inevitably also, inversions of the word order abound. This, too, is common in early literature (to some extent, in all poetry), but the author of *Everyman* seems unable to handle rhyme otherwise. “*Everyman* called it is, /That of our lives and ending shows” (4-5), he writes, counting on us to read “shows” with two syllables to complete his rhyme⁵. It is of course important to take into account early-sixteenth century pronunciation and, consequently, we should not be surprised to find “certain” rhyming with “twain” (655-6). Partial rhymes are by no means uncommon in other writers, but it is the sheer number of imperfect rhymes in *Everyman* that is so difficult to justify: “hate” and “take” (478-9), “eke” and “feet” (503-4), “clear” and “fire” (617-18), “riches” and “there is” (387-8), the list could go on and on. And more often than not, the word order has to be inverted even to achieve these imperfect rhymes. It is not the occasional lapse or liberty that we have to excuse with the author of *Everyman*; everything seems to be somewhat hit or miss. And as I have said, he does not even bother at times with a rhyme. Technical brilliance is hardly the strongpoint of a writer who is ready to rhyme the grammatical ending of words – “-ing” with “-ing” (“speaking” and “ending” at 470-71), just as elsewhere, he is ready to rhyme a word with itself: “thing” with “thing” (524-5)⁶. It is hard to find words that do justice to artistry of this calibre.

I am perfectly aware that negative criticism is a fruitless game and that it is not just because the present writer seems blind to the poetic competence of the author of *Everyman* that the author is indeed incompetent. Simply, I would like to see somebody provide the evidence for his excellence. The play has its admirers; I have already mentioned T.S. Eliot and his regard for the “austere, close language” of the

3 This has been suggested for the speech from *Richard II*, when the Duchess of Gloucester is with John of Gaunt (Act 1, scene 2). The Duchess speaks in rhymed verse which occasionally moves back, briefly, to blank verse. Andrew Gurr suggests this produces “the subtle effect of struggle between incipient breakdown and emotional control” (Forker: 206)

4 Some of the irregularity might be explained by the difficulty of accommodating early-sixteenth century pronunciation with a modern spelling edition of the text. Some, but by no means all.

5 Throughout the play, third person singular present indicative verbs end in “-eth”. This is the only example of a third person ending in “-s”. Interestingly, it comes at the end of a line as the writer looks around in vain for a rhyme. We have no way of knowing whether he regularly pronounced the ending as a separate syllable. The scansion of the text can tell us little since there is no regularity in the rhythm or even in the line length. It all seems rather haphazard.

6 This is not an example of a feminine ending to a line, with the rhyme falling on the preceding word. The writer rhymes “every thing” with “good thing”.

play, but I wish I knew – with examples of particular felicities – what those words meant. Each time I read the play, however much the plot and the situation move me, I feel convinced that this is rather poor stuff. It may have a clear importance in the history of the theatre, and my own feeling is that its place in the history of theology has been underestimated, but we can hardly wish to spend too much time with our students on works clearly lacking in literary excellence. Where gifted writers have a rich store of stock phrases with which to disguise their repetitions, and know how to use conventions without becoming a slave to them, the author of *Everyman* rarely seems to dominate his medium, and the language that Eliot calls “austere” and “close” could also be seen as undistinguished and pedestrian. What the French call *dépouillé* – spare, minimalist, without embellishment – can, to another reader, appear simply impoverished.

This of course is something our students might be ready to understand since a close equivalent exists in the world of popular music. Alongside a Cole Porter or a Leo Ferré, with their metrical mastery and cleverly worded texts, are all the talentless writers, with their ephemeral hits, who do everything for a quick buck. How many young people have fallen in love by the light of the moon in June while humming a tune? How often does grammar get thrown overboard? “Like I do” (although “as I do” would fit the scansion just as well) is a commonplace, and “for you and me” occurs often enough until a rhyme requires grammatical tolerance. In that case, “for you and I” will do nicely. My favourite is “this ever changing world in which we live in”⁷, a line that was written by a man whose song-writing has made him rich beyond any academic’s dream. Why didn’t he do a better job? “That we all live in” could easily replace the final five words while respecting the metre. Does he never bother to revise? Does he consider his first thoughts to be so inspired that they are untouchable? There is no need to be ungenerous: he was probably blissfully ignorant and would, I suspect, accuse me of pedantry. But in our context here, the answer is more problematic.

Just as many songwriters would say that grammatical accuracy is less important than sincerity of sentiments, in the same way many early devotional writers, a good number of whom could indeed do no better, might well say that poetic skill was of less importance than righteousness of sentiment. And this is something we recognise only too clearly in another context: when we look at church hymns we are forced to draw the same conclusion. It is an exquisite irony that the Church, which has been the vehicle of some of the greatest early art – literature, music, and painting – has also saddled us with a collection of “fifth-rate poems set to sixth-rate music” in the words of no less an authority than C.S. Lewis (Lewis 1970: 61-2).

As a poet himself, a church-goer and a distinguished Professor of Literature, Lewis speaks with authority. His remark is something of a generalisation of course,

7 This is from the song “Live and Let Die” written by Paul McCartney for the James Bond film of the same name. The song was even nominated for an Oscar.

since certain items in the various English hymnbooks were written by poets whom Lewis surely admired: Herbert, Cowper, and Bunyan, for instance⁸. But a quick glance at English hymns reveals characteristics we have seen in *Everyman*: strange inversions of word order to achieve dubious rhymes, and vocabulary that is both full of the same old expressions and, at times, frankly odd. As a child, I never realised that “board” meant table, although if I had thought of “sideboard” I might have worked it out. But hymn-writers hung onto the word as a convenient rhyme for “Lord” when it had disappeared from regular usage, just as “sod” (*turf, earth, grass*), a word which has set generations of school children giggling, was fossilised as a rhyme for God long after it had disappeared from polite conversation⁹.

And it was among children, who learnt hymns by heart before they were old enough to read and check the text, that a number of simple and amusing jokes circulated – such was the gap between their everyday language and the language of hymns. The most famous is the story of the child who called his Teddy Bear “Gladly” because it seemed to squint. He got the idea from a hymn he sang at church: “Gladly, the cross I’d bear”. Whether this story is authentic or a comedian’s invention, I do not know, but it gives clear expression to a reality. As a small child singing Christmas Carols, I wanted to know where the kingdom of Orient was. I was not yet able to read and the generalisation “orient” was not part of my vocabulary. Thus “We three kings of Orient are”. was something of a problem.

Such aspects of the language of hymns were not alone in arousing Lewis’s impatience, however; the whole notion of communal hymn-singing was alien to him. One can almost hear the disdain in his voice as he writes of “the lusty roar of the congregation” and the “bellowing from the pews” (Lewis 1967: 96):

Is it ... obvious that the people are edified by being allowed to shout their favourite hymns? I am well aware that the people like it. They equally like shouting *Auld Lang Syne* in the streets on New Year’s Eve or shouting the latest music-hall song in a tap-room. To make a communal, familiar noise is certainly a pleasure to human beings. (Lewis 1967: 95)

The word “noise” recurs: “I have often heard this noise; I have sometimes contributed to it” (Lewis 1967: 96), he says, as though he were getting something off his chest, relieving his conscience. And yet strangely he forgets the Psalmist’s

8 “King of glory, King of peace”, “Let all the world in every corner sing” and “Teach me my God and King” are well-known hymns by Herbert. Bunyan wrote the equally famous “He who would valiant be” although the verse was regularised by Percy Dearmer. A glance at the poetical introduction to *The Pilgrim’s Progress* is enough to show that, although Bunyan was a master of prose, poetry was not his strongpoint. “God moves in a mysterious way” and “There is a fountain filled with blood” are probably Cowper’s most famous hymns.

9 The word is also used for its rhyme in the poem by F.W.H. Myers discussed below. See *Saint Paul*, 2 and 5. In the first tenth of the poem, he uses the rhyme twice.

injunction – using the very same word – “make a joyful noise unto the Lord” (Psalms 66, 81, 95, and 98).

It seems to me that we do well to remember aspects of Lewis’s character which would make him unlikely to enjoy singing hymns, fifth-rate or not. Lewis was not a community man; he did not fit in easily with ordinary people. He had lived a sheltered and privileged life and was clearly most at home in his Oxford (and, later, Cambridge) college. He may have enjoyed a pint of beer in a pub, but when he did so it was most famously to meet other dons and intellectuals, members of the Inklings, and not to rub shoulders with workers from the Morris factories. Lewis and his colleagues met, notably, in the “Bird and Baby”, where tiny rooms gave them a privacy that they could have had back in college, but it is hard to imagine Lewis joining in any singing that might have been heard elsewhere as the beer flowed at “The Bird”. Even as a church-goer, he attended services without music.

Ultimately, however authoritative Lewis’s opinion might be, we must admit that there are other church-going men and women with literary interests – other professors of literature even – who do not find hymns so offensive¹⁰. They might be ready to defend only a few texts on purely literary merit, but they would not necessarily dismiss or despise the others. They might even acknowledge the various stylistic shortcomings with a certain fond indulgence. Nor do we have to imagine them all going to church – tambourines at the ready – for a good, rowdy sing-along. Yes, hymns can be rousing and they can be sung with gusto, but they can also be meditative and strangely moving, for all their gauche simplicity. At important times of the year or of our lives they can give a congregation a sense of unity, of warmth, and of shared values. At times, even non-church-goers are unable to remain indifferent – at a funeral, a wedding, or, quite simply, at Christmas – to sentiments which give genuine expression to grief or joy, or call to mind emotions that they thought they had long forgotten. Hymns, to borrow the words of Diana Athill, “restore the sensation of belief as it used to be” (Athill 2009: 48). Sometimes, we must admit, the words of a hymn take second place because we can be carried along by the music alone. How many people think deeply about Blake’s text when the organ starts playing Sir Hubert Parry’s music for *Jerusalem*? And the tune of Sibelius’s *Finlandia* is so stirring that some six or seven different hymns have been written to it.

It is time perhaps to ask if it is appropriate to condemn hymns for being “fifth-rate” when their primary purpose is not to give literary pleasure. They make use of the medium of verse but they have other jobs to do. The congregation is not meant to be impressed or entertained; their thoughts are to be guided, channelled into an

10 Lewis never became an admirer of hymns but he did acknowledge that singing along with ordinary members of the congregation was a valuable lesson in humility (Lewis 1970: 61-2). Amusingly he allowed his Devil Screwtape to share his original antipathy. Screwtape describes a hymnbook as a “shabby little book containing corrupt texts of a number of religious lyrics, mostly bad, and in very small print” (Lewis 1961: 26).

appropriate direction. In the nineteenth century, that guidance sometimes had a social as well as a spiritual purpose and there are hymns written to lead men and women not only to godliness but away from the demon drink. The dockside missions of the evangelical preachers had more than one job to do and they were trying to reach entirely uneducated audiences. As a result, the language of the hymns is, not infrequently, far from subtle. Old Testament imagery of blood and cleansing is common and used rather literally; being “washed in the blood of the lamb” is a recurrent phrase. But the colourful literalness is not limited to the dockside missions; even some of the most famous hymns, sung by respectable middle-class congregations and written by the most reputable authors, use similar language:

There is a fountain filled with blood
 Drawn from Emmanuel’s veins,
 And sinners plunged beneath that flood
 Lose all their guilty stains.

These are the opening lines of a well-known hymn by Cowper and the imagery attracted criticism even back in the nineteenth century.

Perhaps it was unwise of me to turn from *Everyman* to English hymns because they can never be more than at the edges of the literary canon. They were designed to – let’s say – cater for a far greater public than any literary author could ever reach. In the past, everyone went to church; not everyone read poems or novels or attended theatrical entertainments. A vast number of people had neither the time nor the money. And in catering for the most uneducated members of the community, the hymn-writer’s artistic shortcomings would go unnoticed. However “fifth-rate” a Professor of literature might find the texts, they are written with more talent than most people in a congregation can muster.

Before returning to *Everyman*, let me consider another writer – also at the edges of the canon – who, it seems to me, has been drawn into making the same mistake, that is into writing a poem with a job to do, a poem with a purpose (or a congregation¹¹) in mind. It is six hundred lines long and is written in four-line stanzas which, taken in extracts, strangely resemble a hymn. It is not hard to imagine the final three stanzas being sung in church.

This hath he done and shall we not adore him?
 This shall he do and can we still despair?

11 The publishers of some of the early-twentieth century editions of the poem seem to have identified that congregation in a particular way. I have recently acquired two small, decorative, soft-back editions which seem designed for a lady’s pocket or reticule. They are mere booklets, one with an art nouveau floral design in mauve and the other with flowers within a lattice-work of leaves in pale green and yellow. It is difficult to imagine them being slipped into the pocket of a stern, black-clad Edwardian patriarch.

Come let us quickly fling ourselves before him,
 Cast at his feet the burthen of our care,
 Flash from our eyes the glow of our thanksgiving,
 Glad and regretful, confident and calm,
 Then thro' all life and what is after living
 Thrill to the tireless music of a psalm.
 Yea thro' life, death, thro' sorrow and thro' sinning
 He shall suffice me, for he hath sufficed:
 Christ is the end, for Christ was the beginning,
 Christ the beginning, for the end is Christ. (Myers: 52-3)¹²

The poem is *Saint Paul* by F.W.H. Myers (1843-1901), a poem which enjoyed considerable popularity in the latter part of the nineteenth century. It was first published in 1867 and was reprinted nineteen times in the following forty years, not to mention inclusion in Myers's *Poems* (1870). It was later reprinted in 1910, 1912, and 1916 and was included in the *Complete Poems* (1921), edited by Myers's widow. The poem is largely forgotten today, although Myers himself has become the centre of renewed interest and the importance of his contribution to psychological research has been completely reassessed. Most literary students come across him in relation to George Eliot and a famous walk in the gardens of Trinity College, Cambridge, when they discussed God, Immortality, and Duty (Myers 1883: 268)¹³. He also has the distinction of having written in 1881 a study of Wordsworth which is still in print a hundred and forty years later¹⁴.

Although there were early signs that Myers might earn some distinction as a poet, it was by no means evident that devotional verse would be his strongpoint. Success came early, and when he was still at school Myers won a national poetry competition and attracted the encouragement of Leigh-Hunt, who thought the boy had promise (Hamilton: 18-19). At Cambridge, he continued to be successful and, among a considerable number of awards and prizes, won The Chancellor's English Medal for Poetry. But the young Myers was very much aware of his success and showed signs of a certain intellectual arrogance. Nor was he an unworldly figure. Indeed, he was rather proud of his friendship with a royal prince¹⁵ and enjoyed being "on the outer fringes of the late-Victorian country house week-end circuit" (Hamilton: 3).

Already in his Cambridge days there was something over-emotional in him, and his rather theatrical public reading, in an exaggeratedly poetic voice, of his

12 I use page numbers since the lines of the poem are unnumbered. As there are never more than four stanzas per page, quotations are not hard to find.

13 According to Myers, George Eliot, whom he had invited to Cambridge, "pronounced, with terrible earnestness, how inconceivable was the first, how unbelievable the second, and yet how peremptory and absolute the third".

14 A number of works by Myers have been reprinted in recent years. Cambridge University Press published the volume on Wordsworth in November 2011.

15 Queen Victoria's youngest son, Leopold, Duke of Albany.

medal-winning poem earned him a certain amount of mockery. Before his marriage, he had an intensely emotional but platonic relationship with a cousin's wife, a mother of five, who went on to drown herself out of guilt, no doubt, at her share in her husband's internment in a mental institution (Hamilton: 5). As might be expected, Myers's religion was equally emotional and intense; it smacked of the sensuousness typical of much fundamental evangelicalism. In spite of solid academic credentials, in matters of religion he was not a man of a serious and devout mind; there was less quiet certitude and faith than stirring militancy. His was a religion of feeling rather than of thought, and this seems to have encouraged him to bring a certain inflammatory theatricality to his long poem, *Saint Paul*, clearly written with a like-hearted audience in mind. That, indeed, is the problem.

Even in purely formal matters, the poem calls upon us to give an emotional response. The four-line stanzas contain five feet, four of which are iambic but the first in each line is a trochee. The reader is, as it were, button-holed from the very start of every line, and there is a falling-off until the next line begins in an equally emphatic manner. The falling rhythm is made clearer in that the first and third lines of every single stanza contain a feminine ending. The pounding rhythm remains the same throughout, and the relentless climaxes keep us so constantly at fever pitch that reading the poem becomes almost exhausting. Can we keep up?

The whole poem has a circular movement since it begins and ends with the same word, or rather, the same name: "Christ":

Christ! I am Christ's! and let the name suffice you,
 Ay, for me too He greatly hath sufficed:
 Lo with no winning words I would entice you,
 Paul has no honour and no friend but Christ. (1)

At times, we lose sight of Paul, but the reader's attention (or, more exactly, his emotion) is clearly focused on the central religious truth in a very personal way. This is not theory, theology, or dogma, but a poem about a man's (or man's) private relationship with his Saviour. The phrase "a poem about" is perhaps inappropriate since the text seems to be made up of a number of separate moments of keen awareness. Some of these contain brief emotional and allusive narratives. The Annunciation is evoked (20-21), as is the calling of John the Baptist (35-36). But more often than not, the poet concentrates on moments of intense feeling – doubt, guilt, thankfulness, amazement, humility, commitment. The poem's vocabulary is sensuous, almost erotic; hardly ever are we called upon to reflect and consider.¹⁶

16 A selection of words from the early stanzas will give an idea: ache, fling, thrill, bruised, wounded, burning, bitter, sick, anguish, radiance, desolate, fierce, shame, passion, thunder, agony, pulses, imperil, outweary, frenzy, overladen, quivers, wail, beseeching, hideous, shiver, groaning, surge. Almost each line provides examples.

The mind is almost entirely at the service of the heart. Each moment is felt intensely before being abandoned for another, equally intense. The one hundred and fifty stanzas are grouped into units of varying length – five, seven, two, five again. Half way through the poem is a series of sixteen stanzas, then we move back to shorter units. The poem comes to an end with thirty-two stanzas. The varying length suggests – we are left to presume – the spontaneous rush of emotion as opposed to the artificial organisation of the disciplined poet who serves another master. The most obvious feature, I leave to the last. *Saint Paul* is a torrent of alliteration – not, of course, the structural alliteration of the Old- and Middle-English poems, but a pounding alliteration added to intensify the (often) already emotive, even lurid vocabulary. Myers seems unable to leave alliteration alone. Not a single stanza is without the device, and few lines.

It might be wondered why I am giving so much attention to a poem which, so obviously, I do not admire. Why more negative criticism: can I not leave the poem to slumber, unread, in a progressively smaller number of second-hand bookshops? Myers was, however, an important figure in late-nineteenth century circles, and, although his own religious fervour seems to have cooled, his popularity was not merely among the tambourine-swinging dipsomaniacs down by the docks (oh dear, alliteration is contagious); even respectable members of the middle classes shared his Bible-based, literal, heartfelt evangelicalism and their religious faith overcame their good taste. Hamilton has given a rather convincing assessment of the poem:

Its heady and hectic rhythm stirred, intoxicated and mesmerised the reader, but the words expressed little real clarity of thought or sustained meaning. However, the poem had a kind of whirlwind intensity which gave a certain sort of temperament comfort. (Hamilton: 37)

After the *Complete Poems* of 1921, *Saint Paul* was not reprinted. The “certain sort of temperament” began to die out except in die-hard evangelical communities. In the 1960s, I can testify that the poem was still being read, for example, by members of the Plymouth Brethren movement, and I ordered my 1907 edition of the poem from Northern Ireland, where the Plymouth Brethren still have meeting rooms. In its day, *Saint Paul* was a best-seller. We might still be reading Myers¹⁷ if he had kept his eyes on his work as a poet and had not felt a more pressing duty, like so many hymn-writers, who were sidetracked or chose other options. *Saint Paul* is certainly an important text for the study of nineteenth-century religious sensibility and should not be underestimated; literary scholars and students however have too large a corpus of outstanding nineteenth-century verse to spare much time for Myers. But let me return here to my beginning.

¹⁷ Since writing this article, I have learnt that both *Saint Paul* and Myers’s poems have been reprinted, *Poems* by Bibliobazaar in 2009, and *Saint Paul* in 2010 and 2011 by both Bibliobazaar and Forgotten Books.

I believe the author of *Everyman* was sidetracked in a similar way. His verse play has a certain historical importance, but there is no need to exaggerate its intrinsic merits as a work of literature. Its real interest is its religious significance in the history of the Reformation. Another one of my exaggerations, you may say, because *Everyman* is anything but polemical. There is absolutely nothing in the play to suggest even that the Reformation is under way. The author never warns Everyman to avoid new, heretical ideas as a danger to his soul. Peril comes in failing to observe the teachings of the Church as he has always known it. Instead of taking up position against the reformers, the author of *Everyman* does not even pay the Reformation the compliment of acknowledging that it exists. He makes no attempt to argue; he merely restates his own case. And he did so at a time that, at first, could not have been better, but then, could not have been worse.

There is no extant manuscript of the play and the four different editions that have survived are dated with a regrettable lack of precision: the 1510-25 and 1525-30 editions were published by Richard Pynson, the royal printer, while a certain John Skot published the last two editions in 1525-30 and 1530-35. I believe that events in the early years of the reign of Henry VIII (1509-1547) might encourage us to narrow down those dates. The king of France was at war with the Papacy and was threatening to depose the Pope, Julius II. Henry joined forces with Julius against the French and at the same time employed a number of ghost-writers to help him to complete a volume in defence of the seven sacraments, undertaken to refute the reformist ideas of Martin Luther. It is one of the delightful ironies of history that Henry wrote the chapters on the authority of the Pope and on the sanctity of marriage himself; how extensive his contribution was to the rest of the book is difficult to say. Pynson, the royal printer, published the king's magnum opus in 1521 and the Pope, Leo X, after a certain amount of encouragement on the part of Henry, made the King of England *Defender of the Faith* – a title to put him on a par with the kings of France and Spain, who already had Papal titles.

Not only was Henry fighting alongside the Pope on the continent, but he and Chancellor Wolsey were equally active at home. Reformers who came to England were arrested and persecuted and reformist books were confiscated and burnt. The printing presses, still something of a novelty, were closely watched but the eminently conservative and respectable *Everyman* came along at just the right time. The king's own printer published it and he did so a second time – but, presumably, towards the beginning of the suggested period, 1525-30. Henry had already met Anne Boleyn and by 1526 had shown public approval of her. In 1527 he had informed his wife that he planned to divorce her and, by 1529, when divorce negotiations were about to get under way, he was beginning to realise that there was an uneasy contradiction between the Pope's authority and his own. Henry had not reached the idea of royal supremacy, but his mind was at least beginning to move in that direction (Ives: 129-30). This would not be the time for the royal

printer to risk his royal master's wrath. The second edition of *Everyman* must surely have come hot on the heels of the first, in 1526 or 1527.

Pynson died in 1529 and he may have relinquished his rights to the play before then. When it fell into the hands of one John Skot, we can only presume that it was published again quickly, while conservative ideas were still being heard. Things were, however, about to change. In 1528, Wolsey prosecuted the distributors of Tyndale's translation of The New Testament, but in 1530 Henry set up a commission of enquiry into the need for an English Bible (O'Day: 53). Anyone who wanted to publish *Everyman*, with its restatement of conservative teaching about confession, the sacraments, and priestly authority, had no time to waste. After 1530, the mere survival of the play becomes something of a miracle.

Henry's days of seeking to bolster the authority of the Pope and other priests were gone and there, towards the end of *Everyman*, is a speech of considerable length by Five Wits¹⁸ (712-70) emphasising the importance of the priesthood. It was entirely the opposite of what Henry now found it convenient to believe and the opposite of the messages he now encouraged to be delivered from pulpits and in plays and interludes. The conservatism which must once have ensured *Everyman*'s publication was now likely to be its death sentence.

There is no emperor, king, duke, ne baron,
That of God hath commission
As hath the priest in the world being (713-15)

It is hard to imagine Henry reading these words with composure. And perhaps not only the reformers would have questioned the orthodoxy of the idea that priests are "above angels in degree" (749) and that:

Thou art surgeon that cureth sin deadly:
No remedy we find under God
But all only priesthood (744-46)

The speech by Five Wits reads like a counterattack to the anticlerical propaganda that Henry began to encourage in the early 1530s. A few years earlier, Simon Fish's *A Supplication for the Beggars*, which was addressed to the king, explained at great length the moral, sexual and spiritual corruption of priests. *Everyman* was

18 I believe the point has been neglected, but Five Wits is the only character in the play not to be identified. Only if *Everyman* was a text designed to be read rather than performed can we realise who the speaker is. I am exaggerating, but only a little. The entry of Discretion, Strength, Beauty and Five Wits is announced at 669. The characters speak and Strength identifies herself (827) at 684. She is identified by *Everyman* at 810 and he goes on to identify Discretion at 833. He had identified Beauty at 801. But nobody at any point ever identifies Five Wits. Do we, in the theatre, over a passage of 150 lines or so, remember the initial mention of four characters and, by elimination, identify Five Wits. I suspect not.

written before the *Supplication*, but other texts were in circulation saying similar things. One of the most entertaining is a punctuation poem of the fifteenth century:

Trvsty seldom to their ffriendys vniust
 Gladd for to helpp no Chrysten creator
 Wyllyng to greve settyng all þeir joy & lust
 Only in þe plesour of God havynge no cvre
 Who is most riche with them þey wyl be sewer
 Wher nede is gevyng neyther reward nor ffee
 Vnresonably Thus lyve prestys parde (Robbins: 110)

The meaning changes according to the punctuation or the vocal pauses the reader chooses to give. The text shows clearly both the currency of anticlerical feeling and the danger involved in expressing that feeling.

But by 1530 it was no longer dangerous. On the contrary, it was now *Everyman's* conservatism that had become a danger. When Knowledge interrupts Five Wits to refer to the financial and sexual corruption of certain priests, Five Wits merely refuses to acknowledge the problem and pretends it does not exist: "I trust to God no such may we find" (764), he says, sweeping the accusation under the carpet¹⁹, and continuing with the restatement of traditional beliefs that is the motivating force of the entire "treatise" written "in manner of a moral play".

Once we have paid due tribute to its historical position and avoided too much comment on its artistry, we become aware that *Everyman* is an important text in the history of the early-sixteenth century church. It may well have played a timely (although modest) role before being overwhelmed by the events of the Reformation²⁰. The author was evidently not a man of great literary talent but was, above all, totally committed to a devout purpose.

But what has been the aim of this (imprudent) exercise in negative criticism? Am I suggesting that devotional writing can sidestep traditional literary standards? Certainly not. There are some who might wish to rely on Biblical authority and point out that no man can serve two masters (*Matthew*, 6.24). The Christian author's first duty is to God. Speaking of church music, C.S. Lewis very cleverly adapted I *Corinthians* 13 verse 1: "Though I speak with the tongues of Bach and Palestrina and have not charity..." (Hooper: 732) to suggest that artistic excellence is not enough. But he is not saying that artistic excellence does not matter (Lewis 1939: 183-4). The rules for all writers are the same. And if we adapt the text again: "Though I speak with the tongues of Donne and of Herbert..." we recognise an excuse for what it is. Quite simply, if Donne and Herbert can do it, why should we

19 The poem as a whole uses the same method by failing even to acknowledge the existence of the movement for reform. Recent scandals have shown that the Church, like the author of *Everyman*, seems to favour the method of turning a blind eye.

20 The play presumably had monastic connections and although these were inevitably weakened after 1535, they no doubt ensured the survival of the different editions of the text.