Now Pontius Pilate is to judge the Cause
Of faultlesse Jesus, who before him stands;
Who neither hath offended Prince, nor Lawes,
Although he now be brought in woefull bands:
O noble Governour, make thou yet a pause,
Doe not in innocent blood imbrue thy hands;
But heare the words of thy most worthy wife,
Who sends to thee, to beg her Saviours life.

Let barb'rous crueltie farre depart from thee,
And in true Justice take afflictions part;
Open thine eies, that thou the truth mai'st see,
Doe not the thing that goes against thy heart,
Condemne not him that must thy Saviour be;
But view his holy Life, his good desert.
Let not us Women glory in Mens fall,
Who had power given to over-rule us all.

Till now your indiscretion sets us free,
And makes our former fault much lesse appeare;
Our Mother Eve, who tasted of the Tree,
Giving to Adam what shee held most deare,
Was simply good, and had no powre to see,
The after-comming harme did not appeare:
The subtile Serpent that our Sex betraide,
Before our fall so sure a plot had laide.

That undiscerning Ignorance perceav'd
No guile, or craft that was by him intended;
For had she knowne, of what we were bereav'd,
To his request she had not condiscended.
But she (poore soule) by cunning was deceav'd,
No hurt therein her harmlesse Heart intended:
For she alleadg'd Gods word, which he denies,
That they should die, but even as Gods, be wise.

But surely Adam can not be excusde,
Her fault though great, yet hee was most too blame;
What Weaknesse offerd, Strength might have refusde,
Being Lord of all, the greater was his shame:
Although the Serpents craft had her abusde,
Gods holy word ought all his actions frame,
For he was Lord and King of all the earth,
Before poore Eve had either life or breath.

Who being fram'd by Gods eternall hand,
The perfect'st man that ever breath'd on earth;
And from Gods mouth receiv'd that strait command,
The breach whereof he knew was present death:
Yea having powre to rule both Sea and Land,
Yet with one Apple wonne to loose that breath 790
Which God had breathed in his beauteous face,
Bringing us all in danger and disgrace.

And then to lay the fault on Patience backe,
That we (poore women) must endure it all;
We know right well he did discretion lacke,
Beeing not perswaded thereunto at all; 795
If Eve did erre, it was for knowledge sake,
The fruit beeing faire perswaded him to fall:
No subtil Serpents falshood did betray him,
If he would eate it, who had powre to stay him? 800

Not Eve, whose fault was onely too much love,
Which made her give this present to her Deare,
That what shee tasted, he likewise might prove,
Whereby his knowledge might become more cleare;
He never sought her weakenesse to reprove,
With those sharpe words, which he of God did heare:
Yet Men will boast of Knowledge, which he tooke
From Eves faire hand, as from a learned Booke. 805

If any Evill did in her remayne,
Beeing made of him, he was the ground of all;
If one of many Worlds could lay a staine
Upon our Sexe, and worke so great a fall
To wretched Man, by Satans subtil traine;
What will so fowle a fault amongst you all?
Her weakenesse did the Serpents words obay;
But you in malice Gods deare Sonne betray. 810

Whom, if unjustly you condemne to die,
Her sinne was small, to what you doe commit;
All mortall sinnes that doe for vengeance crie,
Are not to be compared unto it:
If many worlds would altogether trie,
By all their sinnes the wrath of God to get;
This sinne of yours, surmounts them all as farre
As doth the Sunne, another little starre. 820

Then let us have our Libertie againe,
And challenge to your selves no Sov’raignty;
You came not in the world without our paine,
Make that a barre against your crueltie;
Your fault beeing greater, why should you disdain
Our beeing your equals, free from tyranny?
If one weake woman simply did offend,
This sinne of yours, hath no excuse, nor end. 825

To which (poore soules) we never gave consent,
Witness thy wife (O Pilate) speakes for all;
Who did but dreame, and yet a message sent,
That thou should'st have nothing to doe at all
With that just man; which, if thy heart relent,
Why wilt thou be a reprobate with Saul?
To seeke the death of him that is so good,
For thy soules health to shed his dearest blood.  840

Yea, so thou mai'st these sinful people please,
Thou art content against all truth and right,
To seale this act, that may procure thine ease
With blood, and wrong, with tyrannie, and might;
The multitude thou seekest to appease,
By base dejection of this heavenly Light:
Demanding which of these that thou should'st loose,
Whether the Thiefe, or Christ King of the Jewes.  845

Base Barrabas the Thiefe, they all desire,
And thou more base than he, perform'st their will;
Yet when thy thoughts backe to themselves retire,
Thou art unwilling to commit this ill:
Oh that thou couldst unto such grace aspire,
That thy polluted lips might never kill
That Honour, which right Judgement ever graceth,
To purchase shame, which all true worth defaceth.  855

Art thou a Judge, and asketh what to do
With one, in whom no fault there can be found?
The death of Christ wilt thou consent unto,
Finding no cause, no reason, nor no ground?
Shall he be scourg'd, and crucified too?
And must his miseries by thy meanes abound?
Yet not asham'd to aske what he hath done,
When thine owne conscience seeks this sinne to shunne.  860

Three times thou ask'st, What evill hath he done?
And saist, thou find'st in him no cause of death,
Yet wilt thou chasten Gods beloved Sonne,
Although to thee no word of ill he saith:
For Wrath must end, what Malice hath begunne,
And thou must yield to stop his guiltlesse breath.
This rude tumultuous rowt doth presse so sore,
That thou condemnest him thou shouldst adore.  865

Yet Pilate, this can yeeld thee no content,
To exercise thine owne authoritie,
But unto Herod he must needes be sent,
To reconcile thy selfe by tyrannie:
Was this the greatest good in Justice meant,
When thou perceiv'st no fault in him to be?
If thou must make thy peace by Virtues fall,
Much better 'twere not to be friends at all.  880