Eve's Apology in Defense of Women

Excerpted from *Salve Deus Rex Judæorum*
by Amelia Lanyer, 1611

But surely Adam can not be excused,
Her fault though great, yet he was most to blame;
What Weakness offered, Strength might have refused,
Being Lord of all, the greater was his shame: 780
Although the Serpent's craft had her abused,
God's 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 framed by God's eternal hand, 785
The perfectest man that ever breathed on earth;
And from God's mouth received that straight command,
The breach whereof he knew was present death:
Yea having power to rule both Sea and Land,
Yet with one Apple won 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' back,
    That we (poor women) must endure it all;
We know right well he did discretion lack, 795
    Being not persuaded thereunto at all;
If Eve did err, it was for knowledge' sake,
The fruit being fair persuaded him to fall:
    No subtle Serpent's falsehood did betray him,
    If he would eat it, who had power to stay him? 800
Not Eve, whose fault was only too much love,
Which made her give this present to her Dear,
    That what she tasted, he likewise might prove,
Whereby his knowledge might become more clear;
He never sought her weaknesses to reprove, 805
With those sharp words, which he of God did hear:
    Yet Men will boast of Knowledge, which he took
    From Eve's fair hand, as from a learned Book.