Memoranda and Documents

TWO SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY CONVERSION NARRATIVES FROM IPSWICH, MASSACHUSETTS BAY COLONY
EDITED BY ROBERT STRONG

HOUSED in the collections of the Massachusetts Historical Society (MHS) are two unusual, perhaps unique, seventeenth-century religious narratives: one by William Adams, and the other by his wife, Elisabeth. As a poet, I was particularly drawn to the narratives’ vivid relation of the Adamses’ struggles to surmount the challenges, both spiritual and material, that they encountered in the New World, struggles so intense that at one point William fears that he might “cut the throat of my own soul.”

To date, the most thoroughgoing primary source for seventeenth-century lay religious narratives is the series of “confessions” recorded by minister Thomas Shepard. Until now, the Adams narratives have been available only to those few scholars who possess the expertise to dissect the manuscripts’ crabbed texts. So that readers with interests as diverse as religious history, social history, literary history, and poetics may explore the

This project could not have been brought to fruition without the indispensable guidance of Kenneth Minkema, who, with the generous gift of his time and expertise, has greatly expanded the common definition of academic collegiality. I am deeply indebted to him. At a later stage of the process, Douglas Winiarski offered valuable advice that helped me reframe the introduction. Throughout, Linda Smith Rhoads’s editorial persistence, advice, and expertise have been inspiring. Any errors that may remain are mine alone.

1 I encountered the document while engaged in a Mellon Short-term Research Fellowship at the MHS in April 2005, which I received to help me prepare two collections of poetry.


extraordinary and distinctive riches that lay within these early American autobiographies, I offer them to the public, with the gracious permission of the MHS, in their first printed edition.

William and Elisabeth

William Adams and Elisabeth Stacy (or Stacey) immigrated to the Massachusetts Bay Colony during the Great Migration. Their separate journeys brought them to Ipswich, where they settled, married, and lived out their lives. Elisabeth appears to have been born in 1624 in Bocking, Essex, England. Her father Simon was a “relatively wealthy” clothier who, along with his wife Elizabeth Clark (or Clerke) Stacy, was a member of the thriving East Anglian Puritan community. With the ascendancy of Archbishop William Laud, however, Puritans experienced repression. At about the same time (1629–34), a severe economic depression struck the area’s cloth industry. Many Puritans, not only the poorest and most religious, were inspired to emigrate. In the Stacys’ Bocking, “the depression was making the town ‘very hazardous for men of better rank to live’ as the poor were becoming ‘very unruly.’” And so, in about 1636, the Stacys moved all or part of their family to Massachusetts in a migration that would come to encompass nineteen relatives.

William Adams’s origins are more difficult to ascertain than those of the woman who would become his wife. A William Adams (his father), who appeared in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1635, is recorded as a freeman in 1639 and as deceased in 1661 in Ipswich. The son is listed, age 15, among the passengers of the Elizabeth and Ann, traveling to the New World from London in 1635. No other Ipswich residents appear to have been aboard that vessel with William. The best information on William Adams’s emigration can be found in the

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first page of his narrative: “When I was between 14 & 15 years of age, I came Over to New England & here Living first Under the ministry of Master Hooker.”

Thomas Hooker’s Newtown (an earlier name for Cambridge) congregation would have presented the young man with all the influences he would go on to experience in Ipswich: an East Anglian social and ecclesiastical establishment, powerful Puritan ministers, and wealthy and influential fellow congregants. The members of the “Hooker Company,” who traveled to Massachusetts a year before their minister to prepare the way, included families from the Stacys’ Bocking. In June 1636, Hooker’s congregation left Newtown for Hartford, Connecticut; the William Adamses, father and son, chose to resettle in Ipswich instead.

In Ipswich, William and Elisabeth married sometime between 1647 and 1649 and pursued a life that appears to have been of middling status. At his death, the inventory of William’s estate included a “Dwelling house and orchard together with six or seven acres of marsh near to Mr. William Paynes,’ appraised at £70.” His “clear estate” was valued at £278. 13s. 7d., and he possessed “Sixty acres or there abouts of land on the south side of the river by John Addams.” Although it should be noted that William predeceased his father, thus having been deprived of the advantage of inheriting his estate, his assets do not place him and his family among Ipswich’s more comfortable and secure residents. One calculation of the inventoried wealth of those who had settled in Ipswich prior to 1640 pegs the average at £576, with those in the bottom 50 percent holding an average of £142; elsewhere it has been suggested that sixty acres was the minimum amount of land necessary to support a household without benefit of outside income.

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9Thomas Hooker (ca. 1586–1647) traveled to the New World with John Cotton in October 1633.


In April 1655, Elisabeth Adams died, and in January 1659, William did as well. Their son William, having been orphaned at age nine, was apparently cared for by relatives, perhaps the wife of John Whipple, one of the wealthier men in Ipswich, who seems to have been “either a sister of Simon Stacy or of his wife Elizabeth Clerke (Clark).” In any case, William found enough family support to attend and graduate from Harvard, after which he became a respected minister; his own son, Eliphalet, followed the same path. It is Eliphalet who appears to have transcribed the texts of his grandparents’ narratives.

**Ipswich**

The Ipswich of the years covered in the Adamses’ accounts was a town very much at the center of Massachusetts Bay’s religious, political, and cultural life. In 1637, just four years after it was established, it ranked second only to Boston in wealth and population and counted several notables among its residents. While her husband Simon was involved with colony politics, Anne Bradstreet was writing poetry. The Reverend John Norton was vigorously defending New England against its critics. Nathaniel Ward resigned the ministry and wrote *The Simple Cobbler of Agawam* (the native name for Ipswich) and the *Body of Liberties* as well as the preface to Bradstreet’s *The Tenth Muse*.

Under the direction of such men, Ipswich displayed an orthodox Puritan bent from its founding. In 1635, “the town’s minister, Nathaniel Ward, told John Winthrop the Younger that his townsmen ‘of late but somewhat too late have bene carefull on whome they bestowe lots, being awakened thereto by the confluence of many ill and doubtfull persons, and by their behavior since they came.” At Anne Hutchinson’s

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15 I want to thank Anne Bentley at the MHS, who first dated the Adams manuscript’s handwriting and paper to the early eighteenth century and then settled on Eliphalet as the likely copyist, an identification confirmed by further handwriting comparison. I have shared my investigations with Kenneth Minkema, who concurs with the identification, as does Douglas Winiarski.


examination, Simon Bradstreet participated as Assistant to the General Court, Nathaniel Ward’s testimony was invoked, and one William Bartholomew, present as a deputy to the General Court from Ipswich, gave testimony against her.¹⁸

Still, Ipswich existed in the shadow of Boston, a hub that tempted both Winthrop Jr. and the Reverend Norton from their rural dwelling. When rumors spread in 1637 that Winthrop Jr., one of Ipswich’s founders, was leaving, the town’s representatives protested that “it would be too great a grief to us and breach upon us” to lose “not a magistrate only but our Lieutenant Colonell so beloved of our Soldiours and military men, that this remote Corner would be left destitute and desolate.”¹⁹ Norton’s departure, to replace the deceased John Cotton in Boston, was no doubt a more severe blow. Cotton Mather writes of “a Godly Man in Ipswich, who after Mr. Norton’s going to Boston, would Ordinarily Travel on foot from Ipswich to Boston, which is about Thirty Miles, for nothing but the Weekly Lecture there, and he would profess That it was worth a Great Journey, to be a Partaker in one of Mr. Norton’s Prayers.”²⁰

The ministers who directly influenced the Adamses’ spiritual life in Ipswich and about whom they write, giving details about their interactions with and advice for their congregants and their choices of scriptural texts, are John Norton, Nathaniel Rogers, and Ezekiel Rogers (of neighboring Rowley). The Adamses also mention Thomas Hooker, John Cotton, and Thomas Shepard, both their preaching and their publications, as well as works by William Pemble, Francesco Spira, Robert Bolton, and Stephen Egerton. Other members of the Ipswich/Rowley church hierarchies make an appearance: Samuel Philips, John Miller, and William Hubbard.

**Seventeenth-Century Conversion Narratives**

The Adamses’ narratives are rare, perhaps unique, historical documents for seventeenth-century New England. They bear a family resemblance to Shepard’s confessions, which, when rediscovered and published twenty years ago, offered scholars a valuable source for

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analyzing the experiences of the Puritan laity in New England. The confessions, along with similar accounts found in the diaries of Michael Wigglesworth and John Fiske, come to us via ministers. William and Elisabeth Adams’s “accounts” are, to my knowledge, the only extant first-generation lay autobiographies of saving grace recorded by their authors, albeit having been transmitted to us in an eighteenth-century copy. In his work on Shepard, Michael McGiffert notes that “while ministers made many tracks in print, lay people made far fewer, and for the most part ordinary folk made none at all.”

The William Adams narrative is also notable for its length. Whereas lay relations recorded by ministers around the time they were orally delivered in public typically run to a page or two—indeed, Shepard had specifically warned his congregants to be brief—Adams’s narrative is squeezed into twelve cramped manuscript pages. William’s statement elaborates upon the conversion experience that the Shepard confessions and similar texts merely sketch: the counsel of fellow community members; the reading of popular, as well as scriptural, material; the high degree of intellectual reasoning the Puritan faith demands; the horror of doubt and fear of unwelcome providential signs; the spiritual quest’s

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24 Selement, “The Meeting of Elite,” p. 44.
pervasiveness in the lives of believers. William Adams’s narrative extends beyond the occasion of his church admission. Of further interest to the reader are the Adamses’ moving prose styles, which eloquently unfold the more mundane and personal aspects of their daily existence in the 1640s and 1650s.

In sum, the documents detail the “morphology of conversion” at work in seventeenth-century Massachusetts, and in that regard they supplement the lay “confessions” that Shepard had committed to paper. The Adamses were members of the same social and ecclesiastical milieu as Shepard’s would-be church members, and their references to scripture and to ministers correspond with those of which he made note. Indeed, William was probably in Cambridge during the six months in which Shepard’s ministry overlapped with Hooker’s, and his statement suggests that he had heard Shepard preach.

Although they bear a resemblance to Shepard’s confessions, the Adams texts do not present themselves as written for the specific purpose of gaining admission to church membership, which William documents achieving. Perhaps they served as practice for the type of public and oral relations that may have been a part of the admissions process for the Ipswich, as they were for Shepard’s, congregation. Perhaps they record “renewed conversions,” a phenomenon that Baird Tipson has described. Or perhaps, conveying not only spiritual but mundane autobiographical information, they served some private or familial purpose beyond the precincts of the church. As Eliphalet Adams transcribed his grandparents’ writing, this final significance was certainly being experienced by him.

Indeed, the Adams texts are part of a larger body of lay Puritan devotional writings that were being composed for posterity, and, oddly enough, Ipswich produced many of the best seventeenth-century examples. Scholars may recognize similarities between the Adamses’ narratives and, perhaps, Bradstreet’s “Andover Manuscript,” John Dane’s narrative, and Sarah Goodhue’s “Valedictory and Monitory Writing.” To be sure, in their historical particulars and in their putative uses, the Adams narratives will serve the interests of scholars for decades to come.

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25 I am grateful to Douglas Winiarski, author of “Experiencing Conversion in New England” (in *A People’s History of Christianity: Modern Christianity to 1900*, ed. Amanda Porterfield [Minneapolis, Minn.: Augsburg Fortress Press, 2007]), for urging me to distinguish the Adamses’ narratives from typical church admission “confessions” and “relations” and to open them up to a broader consideration of the writing and uses of autobiography during the early seventeenth century in Massachusetts.

The Text

The MHS catalog identifies the document as “Account of his conversion experience, 16—” by William Adams (d. 1659) (Ms. S-46) and describes it as “Accounts of the religious conversion experiences of William and Elizabeth (Stacey) Adams transcribed from their handwriting.” The item itself is titled, in Eliphalet’s hand, as “William Adams of Ipswich. An account of his experiences transcribed from his own handwriting. He dyed Jan. 1659.” In the margin, and in a different hand, is the note “Msstts Hist Soc. presented by Rev. Henry Channing DD. Oct. 1836”—the only record of the document’s provenance. Despite the fact that William and Elisabeth’s son William and their grandson Eliphalet were both ministers, I can find no mention of these narratives in the literature.

While neither the provenance of the document itself, nor the fate of its seventeenth-century originals, can be perfectly traced, the facts available suggest a likely path from William’s (and presumably Elisabeth’s) own hand, through their son William, minister at Dedham from 1673 to his death in 1685, to their grandson Eliphalet, minister at New London, Connecticut, from 1708 until his death in 1753. Eliphalet apparently copied the narratives—a sample of his handwriting at the Connecticut Historical Society clearly matches that of the manuscript—and produced the document Channing donated to the MHS. The manuscript may have come into the custody of Channing, who had also served as a minister in New London from 1787 to 1806, through Eliphalet’s son William, who graduated from Yale and preached for sixty years although he was never ordained.


I was born of Godly Parents, who brought me up in ye fear of God, whereby I was restrained from many Sins, yet my heart was very corrupt


In the left margin of the first page, written vertically from bottom to top, in a later hand, is the following note: “Msstts Hist Soc. presented by Rev. Henry Channing DD. Oct. 1836.”
& Sinful, & often breaking out in Sinful ways & courses, as occasion was
offered unto me, In Old England, I had many notions in my heart about
Heaven & Hell & was sometimes thinking how I might know whither
I Should be Saved or no; When I was between 14 & 15 years of age,
I came Over to New England & here Living first Under the ministry of
Master Hooker\textsuperscript{30} & hearing of ye misery of all men by Nature and of a
work of conversation & believing in Christ, w\textsuperscript{ch} I had heard little of before.
I began to have Some Stirrings in my heart about my condition & began
to think of Setting upon Seeking of God by prayer for ye getting out
of my Natural Condition, but was for a while kept from it, by my own
wretched Sinful Heart, being loth to take pains & making many excuses
for want of Convenient time & place y\textsuperscript{t} I could not do it so secretly, as I
would have done.

But it pleased God, not long after I had been here, Master Hooker
being in Exposition upon Gen. 24\textsuperscript{th} & speaking from v. 63. Concerning
Isaac his going out to pray in the field at Eventide, he from thence pressed
the Duty of Secret prayer upon Every One;

I was thereby brought to Set upon Seeking of God in private, yet
for the most part very coldly & formally, though Somtimes w\textsuperscript{th} much
Affection.

In this Condition I went on a long time, in a Slight performance of
Duty, thereby Stilling my conscience & bearing off the power of the
Convictions of the Word of God & putting off by delays. Easing my Self
with this thought y\textsuperscript{t} I was in the way of Seeking after God & deluding
my Self w\textsuperscript{th} promises of more time & opportunity & that then I would
return unto God; In this time, there were Somtimes, Some more than
ordinary Stirrings of Gods Spirit in my heart, w\textsuperscript{ch} yet were quenched by
the Love of Sin & power of Corruption in my Soul, w\textsuperscript{ch} was harboured
against many Checks of my own conscience, my heart growing more
hardened in Sin & more unable to return to God; But it pleased God
by the ministry of the word, more & more to Convince me of my Sins
& of the Danger of that course w\textsuperscript{ch} I went on in & then I Laboured
to reform my ways & to break off my Sinful courses, But I found my
Self utterly unable to return, my Corruptions being grown So Strong by
long custom in Sinning; About this time hearing M\textsuperscript{r} Norton,\textsuperscript{31} out of

\textsuperscript{30}Thomas Hooker lived in Cambridge only briefly (October 1633–June 1636) before
removing to Hartford.

\textsuperscript{31}William is at this point apparently in Ipswich. He indicates little time between
his last lecture from Hooker lecture and his first from John Norton. He is in Ipswich
perhaps as early as 1636, though he makes no mention of Nathaniel Ward, who resigned
the ministry there in 1637.
the 9th Chapter of the Romans; concerning the Doctrine of Election & Repro // [Ms. p. 2] bation, wth out any respect to works, whither good or Evill, & concerning mans Inability to help himself, yt it is not in him yt willleth or in him yt runneth, but in God yt Sheweth mercy, I had many reasonings in my heart, concerning the justness of Gods proceeding wth man, thinking yt if man were utterly unable to convert to God (as I found I was) then why did God blame man for not returning; Thus my wise heart was quarrelling wth God & ready to Say wth those, Rom. 9. 19. Why doth he yet find fault, for who hath resisted his will? because yt God from Eternity had determined yt Everlasting estate of every man & yt absolutely & yt this will of God was unchangeable; But it pleased God by the preaching of Mr Norton, out of ye 20th & 21st verses of yt 9th of ye Romans, Nay but, O man, who art thou yt replyest against God? &c:

He Shewed from thence yt God might do wth he would wth man, as his Creature, upon point of his sovereignty & yt God did proceed wth man as a Sinner, according to his Justice, yt no man was condemned because he was repro bate, but yt man is condemned for his Sin; my mouth was hereby stopped, for I found yt I had no cause to reply against God, but God might do wth he would wth me, And in respect of Gods Justice I found yt I of all other had most Justly deserved Condemnation, my Sins being So great & many & wth such Circumstances of Aggravation, yt I thought yt God would never Shew mercy unto me,

I found my heart Exceeding hard & Impenitent, Shut up in Contumacy & rebellion, wth I feared yt it was a conseqt of Gods eternal rejection of me, as was Shewed by Mr Norton out of the 22d verse of Rom: 9th, That though reprobation were not ye Cause of Sin, yet Sin & Im penitency was a Consequent of reprobation, though not an effect; Yet being called upon by the ministry to attend upon God in the Use of means, yt being my duty to attend unto & not to meddle wth Gods Decrees, I was Still kept on in a way of Seeking God, though with much fear yt I Should never obtain mercy & oftentimes Even ready to give Over Seeking after God & to Conclude yt I Should one day perish by my Sins; But it pleased God to carry me on in a way of hope by yt Text Joel. 2.14. who can tell, if God will return &c: & Several other places of Scripture, Sometimes by One & Sometimes by Another, as by ye Example of ye Ninevites Jonah. 3.4. & Ezra: 10:2, Yet yt is hope in Israel concerning this. Isa: 1.18. Ezek: 20.9, 14, 22. Isa: 43.25. wth by I was Somwth encouraged yt thô yt was nothing in me to move God to Shew mercy, but cause enough for God most Justly to destroy me & even to make me an example of his wrath, yet God who was wont to work for his Name’s Sake, might Even for his own Namesake Shew mercy unto me; And God was pleased to
help me to plead his Covenant words with me in my Baptism, but I could not find God giving any answer to my prayer, but seeming utterly to reject me; My heart found still remaining hard & my Sins prevailing over me, I found my Self Utterly Unable to repent & return unto God my heart was So Exceedingly Shut up y't I could not pray Unto God many times, Could Scarcce make one petition Unto God, but Even Smite upon my breast & y' words of the publican, cry Lord be merciful to me a Sinner, [Luke 18:13] the most wretched, hard heart ed Sinner y't ever was, who might of all other, most Justly Say Of Sinners I was chief; [1 Tim. 1:15] I tho't y's if Ever there were any profanephearted Esau I was one, who had Sold away my Heavenly priviledges for base Lusts & therefore now Should have no Share in y's grace & mercy y I had So Slighted & rejected; Those words of X'34 would often come into my mind O Generation of Vipers, how can ye escape y' Damnation of Hell, [Matt. 22:33] many times wishing y't I had never been born & would have been glad to have been annihilated or made Nothing To bear y's wrath of God I Saw it was Intolerable & for me to avoid it I tho't it was Impossible; For althô by the ministry of the word, I heard y't there was mercy y' God // [Ms. p. 3] for y's greatest Sinners, yet I tho't that my Case was Extra ordinary, my Sins were so great & committed y I had tho't Slightly of before, it did much affect my heart & Caused me to apply those words of X'y to myself, y's publicans & harlots entred into the Kingdom of heaven, [Matt. 21:31] but I Should be Shut out; I tho't y's I was like y's Son who Said to his father, he would go into y's Vineyard, but went not, [Matt. 21:30] Others who had not made So fair promises, went before me; I was many times ready to Conclude y's time of grace was past y me & y my Condition was now grown hopeless; when I heard any Doctrine Concerning believing in X, I could not Any whit hearken to it, I thought y't it belonged not unto me, Especially, hearing Mr Norton out of, Rom. 9th, verse 33d, Whosoever believeth in him Shall not be ashamed. He Shewing from thence y't there was Salvation in X for y'

34Bracketed scriptural references are mine.
33See, e.g., Heb. 12:16, "Lest there be any fornicator, or profane person, as Esau, who for one morsel of meat sold his birthright." For the story of Esau, see Gen. 25–36.
34Shorthand for “Christ.”
35Matt. 3:7 and 12:34 and Luke 3:7 also use the phrase “generation of vipers.”
greatest of Sinners, even Such as I was, none excepted, It did much affect my heart yet there was mercy for Such Sinners as I was. But I thought that it belonged not to me, for I was not yet Humbled; I thought I had not any preparation to faith, I had not So much as felt Spirit of Bondage, because I could not Ins tance any time, wherein Some great terror had fallen up on me, as I had heard Others Speak of at y beginning of y Conversion; I thought y could be no work of Conversion, but first beginning of it must be in Such a manner; my heart was much affected herew, that though I was Convinced there was grace in X for all y did believe in him & it was not y greatness of my Sins y could hinder, yet I had nothing to do therew; It was far off from any mercy; Like unto y prodigal I had went farther from God than any had, but Unlike him in his returning; I thought others might apply that grace that was offered in X, but I might not, oftentimes ready to Conclude with those, in Ezek: 37.[11] that my hope was Lost and I for my part was Cut off, I was like to him y owed 10000 talents, but find nothing to pay.37 But it pleased God Mr Norton preaching out of Rom: 10. 4. X is ye End of ye Law for righteousness to Every one y believeth, He shewing from thence ye Every Believer hath only, & fully in X, all ye righteousness required in the Law & ye it was ye Duty of Every one y hears ye gospel to Believe in X, and y it was all one with X to take away y Sins of the greatest Sinner, as of the lest Babe; And likewise ye great Sin of Unbelief, ye it was a greater Sin not to believe in X, than it was to kill X &c: He also Shewed ye measure of Humiliation did dispose ye Soul to believing, That true Humiliation, it did not consist in Terror of Conscience, For ye Devills were terrifyed Enough yet could not believe, But ye true Humiliation consisted in ye right Acknowledgm of the Law of God, ye God might Justly Condemn the Soul for its Sins, ye mouth be Stopped & have nothing to Say against God; And in Acknow ledgm of ye gospel, ye if God Save ye Soul, it is from his free grace & mercy in X & So a Despair of Salvation from any thing but only ye free grace and mercy of God in X, He shewed ye it was ye Duty of Such Souls So to attend to ye work of humiliati on, as yet to be Labouring to believe in X: I could not deny but ye I had found Such a work of Humiliation in my heart & was thereby Convinced y it was my Duty to Labour to believe

36William compares his psychological experience with those he has heard described; compare Elisabeth’s “horror” ms. p. 13 below.
38Elisabeth appears to have been present at this same sermon; see below ms p. 14.
in X; Likewise considering ye general & Inde finite tender of ye Gospel to all, wth out Exception, I was Som what more Encouraged to wait upon God in ye use of means, though I tho if Any were Excluded I Should, Yet I was Encouraged by ye word of God. Rom: 10. 9. If thou shalt Confess wth thy mouth & believe in thy heart &c: M' Norton shewing ye these words, If thou, did note Every particular person wth soever or wth Sinner Soever, ye if they did believe in X they Should be Saved; Yet I thought I must first // get power Against my Sins & corruptions, before I might lay hold on X, wth I found I was utterly unable to do, my Sins being grown So Habitual. It pleased God to bring into my mind, Somthing wth I had formerly heard by M' Shephard preaching out of Mark. 5. 25, 26, con cerning ye woman who had ye bloody issue, he not ed ye there was Sufficient Virtue in ye Lord J. X to cure old & Inveterate Evills, though She had been long diseas ed & had Spent all ye She had upon Physicians & was noth ing Bettered, but rather grew worse (wch I tho was my condition) yet one touch of X would Cure all; yet af ter this it pleased God to let me fall Again & then I tho my Condition worse than Ever, ye now I was Condemned both by Law & Gospel & had now Sinned Against ye reme dy & therefore now there was no mercy for me, I was for ye Space of a fortnight full of very Sad fears, & ready to give over ye means, thinking ye I Should never obtain mer cy; One time Especially, going alone to prayer, I was rea dy to turn back, thinking ye it was but in vain, ye I had as good run on in my Sins, for I Should Certainly perish at last, But it pleased God to help me to Consider ye if I Should turn my back upon God, ye were to Cut ye throat of my own Soul & to make my Condemnation Sure & I could not tell but ye God might yet have mercy upon me, ye yet there might be hope, though I tho ye it was ye most forlorn hope ye Ever any had; Thus it pleased God to keep me waiting upon him; The Next Sabbath day, M' Norton being to preach out of Rom: 10.13, Whoseover Shall call on ye Name of the Lord Shall be Saved, I did much desire to hear him upon those words, but Just before Sermon I was Sent to watch on ye Terret of the meet Ing house, Where I could only hear ye Sound of his Voice, wch did much affect my heart, I tho ye now God did Even deprive me of ye means wch Should do me good. But it pleased God in ye Afternoon M'

39Thomas Shepard (1605–49). Born Towcester, Northhamptonshire, he arrived in Cambridge in October 1635, where Adams likely heard him preaching. Shepard was ordained by the congregation he gathered in Cambridge in 1636.

40In Shepard’s Confessions, Mary Angier Sparrowhawk reports “hearing the sermon of the woman that had the bloody issue.” She joined Shepard’s Cambridge flock probably in 1639 and died in 1644. See McGiffert, God’s Plot, p. 170.
Rogers\textsuperscript{41} preaching out of Eph. 5. 32.\textsuperscript{42} Concerning ye\textsuperscript{e} mystical marriage & having Spoken concerning ye\textsuperscript{e} Divorcing of ye\textsuperscript{e} Soul from Sin and being Speaking of God, drawing ye\textsuperscript{e} Soul unto X\textsuperscript{t}, w\textsuperscript{ch} is done by discovering of Salvation to be in X\textsuperscript{t}, He shewed y\textsuperscript{i} X\textsuperscript{t} Comes in ye\textsuperscript{e} gospel, preaching Salvation to poor Sinners & thô by our Sins we had destroyed Ours\textsuperscript{e}, yet in X\textsuperscript{t} there is help Hos. 13.9. And thô we have fallen by our Iniquity, yet we may be raised by X\textsuperscript{t} Hos. 14.1. Jer: 3:1. That though ye\textsuperscript{e} guilt of our Sins Stood in our way as ye\textsuperscript{e} Law of ye\textsuperscript{e} medes & persians [Dan. 6:12] w\textsuperscript{ch} altered not, yet God gives poor Sinners liberty to plead for ye\textsuperscript{e} Lives, as ye\textsuperscript{e} Jews. Est. 8.11. He did much Encourage poor, lost and one Sinners, to Set y\textsuperscript{m} s\textsuperscript{t} to Seek mercy at Gods hands; This did much affect my heart & gave me greater Encouragm\textsuperscript{t} than Ever I had before & Caused me more Earnestly to be Seeking after X\textsuperscript{t}; I was also Encouraged by y\textsuperscript{i} in John. 3. 14,15,16,17. I Consided if Whosoever, then God had not Excluded me, Likewise Acts. 10.41 & 1. Tim. 1.15,16. And in ye\textsuperscript{e} next Sermon upon, Eph. 5. 32. I was farther Encouraged, M\textsuperscript{r} Rogers quoting, Heb. 7. 25. y\textsuperscript{i} X\textsuperscript{t} is able to Save to ye\textsuperscript{e} uttermost &c: Though I had Sinned to ye Uttermost & Stood it out to ye\textsuperscript{e} Uttermost, & Looking into. Luke. 15, concerning ye\textsuperscript{e} prodigal, ye\textsuperscript{e} Lord was pleased to help me to See more into his grace & mercy therein manifested to poor Sinners, than Ever I did before & therein to See my Condition to be like his, y\textsuperscript{i} thô I had run far from God & Spent all ye\textsuperscript{e} Talents w\textsuperscript{ch} God had bestowed on me upon my Lusts, yet God was ready w\textsuperscript{th} Compassion to receive & Embrace me return ing unto him; After this M\textsuperscript{r} Norton preaching out of Rom 10.15.\textsuperscript{43}

\textsuperscript{41}There are two Mr. Rogerses in this text, Nathaniel Rogers (c. 1598–1655) of Ipswich and Ezekiel Rogers (1590–1661) of Rowley. For the most part, it seems that references to “Mr. Rogers” refer to Nathaniel, whereas Ezekiel is designated as such or as “Rogers at Rowley.” There are potential points of confusion, however, for the ministers visited and preached in each other’s towns. In addition, Elisabeth “went to live with Mr. Rogers at Rowley” for a time, perhaps as a servant, and apparently then designates Ezekiel as “Master Rowley.” William here seems to indicate Nathaniel Rogers (ordained 1638), son of Rev. John Rogers of Dedham, Essex, and author of The Doctrine of Faith, among other works. Nathaniel was father to five sons, including John (ordained in Ipswich in 1656 and installed as president of Harvard in 1681) and a single daughter, Margaret, who married the historian Rev. William Hubbard.

\textsuperscript{42}The context of the passage and its resonance in the Adamses’ twin narratives is best conveyed by the totality of Eph. 5:30–33. “For we are members of his body, of his flesh, and of his bones. For this cause shall a man leave his father and mother, and shall be joined unto his wife, and they two shall be as one flesh. This is a great mystery: but I speak concerning Christ and the church. Nevertheless let every one of you in particular love his wife even as himself; and the wife see that she reverence her husband.” This passage is mentioned again by William below, ms p. 5, and by Elisabeth on ms p. 15.

\textsuperscript{43}See Elisabeth’s reference to Rom. 10.14 and this same line on ms p. 15, below.
How Shall ye preach except ye be Sent? Shewing ye with a divine mission ye could be no // [Ms. p. 5] effectual revelation of X to a lost Soul, quoting. Luke. 4. 25, 26.44 many widows were in Israel &c: but to none of ye was Elias Sent, Save to the widow of Serepta, he shewed, ye wth famine is in many places, yet God passeth ye Over & Sends to ye poor widowed Soul, ye is Shut up under its Sins and Corruption cnt help itself & forgives its Sins freely, be ye few or many & gives it faith & X freely; This did much affect my heart and Encourage me. And in ye afternoon Mr. Rogers on Eph. 5: 32. Shewing how God breaks those ways of Self Salvation, wch ye Soul is apt to rest upon, as by shewing ye foulness of Sin & Sin of our Natures & Shewing no acceptance of his prayers & taking Away ability to perform du tyes & letting loose Some Corruption & plunging the Soul dee per and deeper to humble it, I tho ye therein he Spake my very heart, as I had found ye God had dealt wth me, He did much Encourage Such, Shewing ye God thereby was doing ye much good, leading ye in ye right way & pull ye off from all & fitting ye for X & ye So ye might not lose their Souls, but might be ye better X all ye Lives: This did Exceeding ly Encourage me ye God Should be doing me So much good, by ye wch It had tended to my Destruction. After this Mr. Norton preaching out of Heb. 8.8.45 concerning ye new cov & Shewing ye it was an act of Gods Lordship & good pleasure & ye good of ye Elect it flows from ye Eternal good pleasure of God, I was much affected therewth al & tho it was a truth Concerning me ye I was a man of Gods good pleasure. Luke: 2. 11 Likewise hearing Mr. Ezekiel Rogers on Rev. 2. and he Speak ing to ye never had Any first Love, to Con sider how ye were Sinning & Rebelling Against God, yet God was Labouring to Save ye Souls, it did much melt my heart. Yet Still I had many Objections in my heart Against believing, as not being Sufficiently humbled & finding So much power of Sin in me, I would fain have found Somthing in my Self, but could not. Mr. Rogers Again preaching from. Eph: 5.32. concerning Gods work of perswasion of the Soul to come to X, by declaring both ye Sufficiency of X & Gods willingness to give X to ye Soul, he answered many objections wch a Soul might make, many or most of wch being ye objections of my heart, wch were hereby much

44See Elisabeth, ms. p. 15, below.
45"Notes on Sermons delivered at the First Church in Ipswich, Mass., 1645–1646" (MHS manuscripts) notes that for August 1645 "Mr. Norton, Lecture, at Ipswich, Text in 8 Heb., behold the days come, saith the Lord when I will make a new covenant." Coming as it does between the references to Eph. 5:32, which Elisabeth mentions below after both the death of her father and "some fear of Indians," we can narrow the date range for those events.
taken Away, & Shewing ye dreadful danger of Continuing in Unbelief, I knew not what to do, I could not believe; many reasonings I had yet had in my heart, about Gods willingness to receive me, tho' I was Convinced of his sufficiency; About that time, being at work abroad in ye field, there Appeared a Storm Arising, which made me to hasten homeward, with many Serious thoughts occasioned thereby Concerning my Condition, Considering I need I had to hasten to get into X to be Saved from ye Storms of Gods wrath.

But ye Storm Seeming to go Over again I Slackt my pace, but before I got home, ye Shower came up & I was taken in ye rain, not far off from home, which did very much affect my heart; I tho' God therein did very livelyly Shew me my condition, and tho' I were brother near to X, yet if now I rested without being gotten into X I was Undone. That Text in, Num. 35. 26, 27. often pressed by Mr Norton to Such purpose, came affectingly into my mind, that if ye Slayer were at any time found, but without ye gates of ye City of refuge, ye avenger of blood might Slay him & be guiltless, So I tho' how near Soever I might be to X, yet if not gotten into X, ye Storms of Gods wrath would Overtake me; And Such like thoughts my heart was taken up with, And Considering ye freeness of Gods grace in offering of X to Such a Sinner as I & perswading me to believe, my heart was much taken up with wondering and admiring at ye grace of God & was much taken up with those words of X Mat. 11.20. Even So father for So it pleased thee, I Saw ye could no Other reason be given but Only ye meer good pleasure of God, But then there came into my mind Somthing of a Sermon of Mr Cottons, which I had Seen, out of Acts. 8. Behold ye Despisers and wonder and perish: was not enough for me to Admire & wonder at ye grace of X, but unless I did believe in him, I Should be found to be a Despiser & Should perish, which did much affect my heart; And Considering ye it was unbelief ye Shut ye children of Israel out of Canaan, I Saw ye it was not my Other Sins but my Unbelief ye would Shut me out of heaven; I Saw ye my Everlasting State depended upon it & Considering Gods command ye I Should believe & my great Sin in not believing, I was in a great Strait, Seeing ye if in this I did miscarry I was Undone for Ever. I tho' ye of all Other had need to take heed ye I missed not of X, my Sins being So many & great, ye if ye were not taken away by X, my Condition of all others would be most

\[46\] William appears to have a published text, or copied notes, of a John Cotton sermon on Acts 8.
miserable; Then ye' was much reasoning in my heart about believing, I tho't I knew not w't it was I Should believe; To believe ye' my Sins were pardoned, ye' I Saw I could not do, till I were by faith united to Him; It pleased God to bring to my mind w't I had heard Mr. Norton upon. Rom. 10.4. he distinguishing between these 3 propositions. 1.) Believing on X't, a Saviour to y'm w'ch do believe. 2) Believing in X't, a Saviour to me believing. 3) Believing in X't a Saviour to me a Believer. The Second of these he Shewed to be Justifying faith, w'ch looks at X't direct.

So that his Conclusion was, ye' ye' Soul was to believe in X't, w'ch yet he Shewed was in Scripture Expressed by diverse metaphors, as committing, leaning, trusting to X't. Yet Still I knew not how to Commit my Soul to Christ & though I had heard many definitions of faith & did look into all ye' books of faith, w'ch I could get, yet I could not be Satisifyed. I knew not how to Come to X't & Commit my Self to X't. Then ye' L'd was pleased to help me to consider ye' place. Eph. 2.8. ye' Faith was ye' gift of God & ye' God was ye' Author & finisher of ye' faith of his people & ye' none could Come to X't Except ye' father draw him and ye' God had in ye' Cov't of grace undertaken to work faith & it was only God ye' could work it; I was Encouraged to beg Earnestly of God ye' he would be pleased to work his faith in my heart. It pleased God to bring to my mind often & affectionately ye' Text. Isa: 42.16. I will bring ye' blind by a way w'ch ye' know not, I will lead ye' in paths w'ch ye' have not known, I will make darkness Light before ye' and crooked things Straight there things will I do unto ye' & not forsake ye'. It did much Encourage me to look up to God & plead his promises for ye' working of faith in my heart. And about this time it pleased God to bring to my hand a little Book, Entitled, Comforts to Strengthen the weak in Faith; wherein ye' were many objections Answered w'ch were ye' Objections & fears of my heart & many Encouragt's for Such Souls, w'ch was a great help unto me, I was so far bro't as to assent to ye' truth of Gods promise & Gods faithfulness therein & in respect of my particular, ye' if I did believe I Should be Saved, Ear nestly Desiring of God to work faith; I tho' ye' I was in ye' Case of that man. Mark. 9. 24. in ye' part of his Speech Crying, Lord help my unbelief; but durst not profess before ye' Lord ye' I did believe; I Saw ye' it was not Enough for me to Say in words, I do believe, unless I did w'ch my heart believe & receive X't I Should but ly unto God in so

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47See Elisabeth, ms. p. 14, below. It should be noted that sermon references and events as recorded by William and Elisabeth do not always align perfectly. Ministers commonly preached on certain biblical passages over a period of many weeks.

48Stephen Egerton, Comforts to strengthen the weake in faith (London, 1630).
professing, I tho' I did desire to believe & was Exceedingly afraid of Standing it Out Against God by Unbelief & also Exceedingly afraid of a false faith, I durst not but acknowledge to God ye' truth & faithfulness of his promises & his meaning therein to my Soul in particular if // [Ms. p. 7] I did believe, wth I Saw to be altogether out of my power, I had no other help but to Cry to God, in whose power Only it was to work it, ye' he would be pleased to draw me unto X; God was pleased to Carry me on in a way of Searching into ye' promises & such treatises Concerning faith as I had, And reading in Mr Pemble Concerning ye' Nature of faith & bro' to some dependence upon X; yet after this I found my Corruptions Exceeding Strong & prevailing over me wth more power than Ever, So ye' I was Sadly discouraged.; I tho' much upon those words. Jer. 2. 37. *The Lord hath rejected thy confidences,* I tho' ye' the Lord had utterly rejected me & would now Cast me off, yet it pleased God to keep me waiting upon him, begging his mercy; That Example of ye' woman of Canaan [Matt. 15:21–28] did Encourage me, Though I Saw ye' I was but a Dog, unworthy of ye' last Crumb of mercy, deserving nothing but hell, ye' Lord was pleased to help me to Acknowledge it before him if So ly at his pleasure, yet Earnestly pleading ye' he would be pleased to glorify ye' Infinite riches of his mercy in Shewing mercy upon me. About this time I was much follow ed wth Atheistical tho' ready to question whither ye' were a God & whither ye' Scriptures were ye' word of God or no, but by Considering of ye' works of God, & reading in Mr Pemble how ye' Scriptures do manifest ye' s to be ye' word of God, as ye' Light manifests itself & all Other things, I was Somthing helped against ye' About this time being up alone in an Evening & reading in Mr Pemble Concerning ye' particular Act of Justifying Faith it is ye' Adhrance, reliance, Dependence, affiance &c: of ye' Soul upon X, That whereby (the Soul being convinced of its Sin & misery & helpless Condition and X Je sus proposed & offered to ye' &c:) ye' Soul runs unto X to Save it from perishing, ye' ye' Soul clings to & clasps about X wth adhrance, relyance, &c: the Lord was pleased So to Overpower my heart & bring me into Such a frame as I am not able to Express, Committing and resigning my Soul up unto X, Earnestly desiring the Lord to

bring me off from all Lusts & Sins & Self & to take full & Everlasting possession of my heart, y'd I might never any more depart from him to Any Sinful way; After this my heart was Somthing Stayed, The L'd was pleas'd much to Encourage me by y'd in. Jer. 31. 3. Yea I have Loved thee with an Everlasting Love, therefore with Lovingkindness have I drawn thee the L'd was pleased to let me See his footsteps upon my Soul how he had been drawing me Unto X'd & y'd this was an Ef fect of Gods Everlasting Love to my Soul; And y'e L'd was pleased to let me feel Some Changes in my heart, Another disposition of heart, much delighting in y'e ordinances of God & prizing of his Sabbaths & y'e means of grace, I then desird to Join my Self to y'e people of God; w'n I declared my condi tion to y'e Elders, y'd Seemed to Encourage me, thô y'd Said little to me then, M' Rogers bidding me y'd I Should hold on was Some Encouragm't to me. The next Sabbath day M' Norton preaching out of Rom: 10. 17. Faith Cometh by hearing & Shewing how God by his word doth bring the Soul to faith in X', After y'e work of y'e Law, bringing y'e Soul into a dead & helpless condition, then the gospel reveals X' Jesus & y' he & he only can Save y'e lost Sinner, That nothing but y'e blood of X' Can Save y'e lost Sinner and y'd blood can Save y'e greatest, that X' Saves us not for any thing in us // [Ms. p. 8] but w'th out money. Isa: 55.1. That X' will Save for noth ing. I Tim. 1: 14, 15. y' y'e Spirit of God opens these things to y'e Soul, propounding argum't, perswading, urging the Soul to believe, & inwardly Accompanyes y'e word, working y'd it perswades, unto giving these Evangelical affections & causing y'e Soul to come at y'e call of X', wh'th follows union, all eternal relation between X' & y'e Soul, I found y'd God had thus gone along w'th my Soul, humbling & Emptying of me & laying me Low & making me to feel y'e Absolute need of y'e grace of God in X' & drawing my Soul unto X' whereupon my heart was filled w'th much peace & Sweet comfort, much Adoring & admiring at y'd Infinite free rich grace of God, Extended to my Soul, in my forlorn & helpless Estate & Condition; My heart was often breath ing out in thankfulness & admiration, many of those thankful Expressions of Gods

50William appears to be following the standard orthodox sequence for admittance to full church membership. See Notebook of the Reverend John Fiske, pp. 17–18: “Every person desiring membership first broached his wish to the minister who, within a few days, arranged a preliminary screening.”

51This is William’s last mention of Norton, who departed to Boston to replace Cotton (at Cotton’s suggestion) in 1653.

52Note that this sermon appears to open the door to the sequence that follows, which culminates in William’s perception of God’s saving grace (“whereupon my heart was filled w'th much peace & Sweet comfort, . . .”).
Servts in Scripture, as. Psa: 116. I saw yt I had great cause to Come before God wth yt Acknowledgemt. Deut. 26. 5. A Syrian ready to perish was my father &c: & to Say as in. Ezek 16. I was an Amorite, an Hit-tite, cast out in my blood, & then God Said unto me, Live And to Say wth Sarah. Gen. 21.7. Who would have Said, y\textdegree Ever any grace Should have been wro\textdegree in my barren dead heart Often Saying as Paul. 1. Tim. 1: 17. now unto the King Eternal, Immortal, the only wise God, be hon our & glory for Ever and Ever. Amen & y\textdegree in Rev. 1. 5,6. Un to him yt Loved us & washed us from our Sins in his own blood & hath made us Kings and priests Unto God & his father, to him be glory & Do-minion for Ever & Ever, Amen. And often calling upon my Soul wth ye words of David. Psa: 103. Bless ye L\textdegree O my Soul, & all yt is wth in me bless his holy Name &c: & yt of David. 2. Sam: 7: 18,19,20,21. I Saw yt only out of Gods own Heart proceeded all ye great things & cons-idering ye freeness & peculiarity of Gods Election of So Small a Number Comparatively wth the rest of ye world, I was Even Confounded to think yt I Should not be left Among ye Vast multitude of those yt perish in their Sins, often think ing of yt in Psa: 65. 4. Blessed is yt man wth thou chusest & causeth to Approach Unto thee yt he may dwell in thy courts I tho\textdegree yt this So Undeserved mercy shewed to them Such desperate misery, Should for Ever affect my heart & yt I Should even for Ever be declaring to Angels & Saints, w\textdegree G\textdegree had done for my Soul. But I Soon find a Declining in ye affections, my Heart being by little & little drawn away from my first Love, I began to have many fears that I Should not persevere; yet God was pleased to Encourage me yt he who had begun his good work, would also Carry it on. After this I was received into the Church,\textdegree Some presence of X\textdegree I found in his Ordinances, but not Such as I Expected & desired, My heart much Cooling, old Corrup tions returning Again upon me, w\textdegree I had hoped, I Should no more be troubled w\textdegree, yet I was much held under by y\textdegree

\textdegree\textsuperscript{53}From here forward, William Adams (or his transcriber) often uses a symbol for “God” that was common in shorthand systems of the time. See, e.g., James Weston, Stenographia (1727). The mark is a “G” that looks much like an enlarged lowercase “y” whose stem drops straight down.

\textdegree\textsuperscript{54}William was received into membership near the date of his marriage (see below). It is not absolutely clear that the Ipswich church required a public profession of saving grace at this time. Michael G. Ditmore noted of William Hubbard Jr.’s pastorship (1656–1702), “We know that the church relation requirement was not universal, so [William, Jr.] Hubbard’s Ipswich congregation may not have required church relations or radically downplayed their importance into a mere formality. No Ipswich church records are extant” (“Preparation and Confession,” p. 313, n. 28).
Though not without some conflict yet I did not so kindly recover out of my falls as I should have done, since I was much discouraged, yet sometimes encouraged by the word of God.

Afterward being desired to undertake the calling that now I am employed in, I was very fearful in respect of so many temptations accompanying it, which I feared would even overthrow me utterly, I finding so much prevailing of corruption within me and so hard to keep my heart in any frame yet God's providence seeming so to call, I was counselled and encouraged to it, but the thing which I feared did in great measure come upon me, my heart grew into a very dead and cold frame; after my marriage I found some little reviving God having given me so gracious an help; but being so much oppressed with overmuch labour and incumbrances in my calling, I fell into such a dead and drowsy frame, as that I was fit for no duty or service and found little of God's presence in the ordinances. Mr. Rogers preaching out of 1 Sam. concerning Saul his hypocrisy, I had many checks of conscience, fearing that I had dealt falsely with God and that God had rejected me. That more troubled me was that I had not laid open my heart to any, nor confessed those sins which I had been most addicted to and held under the power of, which made me to fear that it was from some guile and falsehood in my heart. About this time I was being a publick fast appointed to be kept, Mr. Rogers the Sabbath before it stirring up people to preparation to the duty, among other things advised, that if there were any thing between God and our souls we would labour to remove it that God might meet us in mercy that day, I then resolved I would go and lay open my heart to Mr. Rogers; he told me confession of sin to man was not always necessary, yet when God did give any an heart so to do, it was not with out some fruit. Ps: 32. wishing me more to prize the blood of Christ which cleanseth those deepest stains of our souls; He did encourage me and told me that it was a good argument of sincerity of my heart I was careful to remove which might hinder the presence of God from my soul, this was some encouragement to me, and on that fast day I found some approach of God toward me, something melting of my heart; yet after this I still continued in a very dead frame.

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55 Meredith B. Colket, *Founders of Early American Families: Emigrants from Europe 1607–1657* (Cleveland: General Court of the Founders and Patriots of America, 1985), in a citation for William Adams that seems to conflate our author with his father, lists his occupation as "Planter, Miller."

56 See Elisabeth, ms. p. 15, below: "Soon after I went to Mr Rogers & made my condition known to him."
It pleased God something to Awaken me by ye preaching of Mr. Hubbard upon. Mat. 25. concerning ye Sudden coming of X upon Sleepy & Secure professors, he also Shewing w in ye principal Differ ence between a believer & an Unsound heart lay, yt it was in ye Inward bent & inclination of ye will, it did much Encourage me. I tho I found ye Inward bent & Inclination of my heart, Standing towards God, though I were So much held Under by my Corruptions & my dead & Slight heart; I was also Encouraged by Mr. Rogers’s preaching on John. 15. 2. he laying down Some notes of tryal, whither we were true branches of X, from ye Substance of our fruit, yt our Endeavour be to live according to ye gospel & ye heart Subject to ye gospel & though we fall infinitely Short yt yet our hearts Stand bent to ye will of God. 2] From ye manner of our fruit, yt it Come from an Inward principle, yt ye be a flux of ye Sap w th in, of ye Inward grace of ye Soul, ye Our Actions be not only Comman ded, but Come from ye Inward Desires & breakings of ye Soul Isa: 26. He Shewed yt these Desires were ye best notes of Sincerity & Gods pleasant fruits. 3] From ye Suitableness of our fruit w th ye Seed, Our Actions framed according to ye Spirit of the work &c: In ye laying down of these Signs I found my heart, in Some measure to go along w th ye w ch was Some Encouragement Unto me, Yet finding my Corrupt passions to prevail over me, I was often much Discouraged; Not long after yt being a Sacram Appointed I was much troubled (having formerly not So found God in yt Ordinance as I might have Expected) lest Still it Should be So & yt I Should provoke Gods displeasure more Against me, I then went to Mr. Rogers & told him how it was w th me & how I was held under my old Corruptions & yt was almost all ye Encouragement I had Left, namely yt w ch ye Church Speaks in Isa: 26. 8. The Desire of our Soul is to thy Name &c: I tho I felt those inward desires after God; He did Encourage me & bid me make much of yt Testimony, for yt was ye most blessed Sign of Sincerity; my heart was thereby much Eased & I found Something more of Gods presence in yt Sacram than formerly. After this Mr. Rogers preaching out of Eph: 1.13. Concerning ye Sealing of ye Spirit & coming to encourage ye people of God to Come

57There were two William Hubbards in Ipswich at this time, father and son, both of whom arrived on the Defence in 1635. William Hubbard (1621–1704) the son graduated from Harvard in 1642 and settled in Ipswich, where he was ordained teacher in 1658. He married Margaret, the only daughter of Rev. Nathaniel Rogers. (His sister, Margaret Hubbard, married Rogers’s son Ezekiel [not the Ezekiel of Rowley].) He is most famous as a historian for his A General History of New England, which is a key source for Edmund S. Morgan’s Visible Saints, including on the issue of the required narrative of saving grace.
up to assurance, to look to those signatures of the Spirit of God & those Impressions of ye grace of God upon ye Soul, wch are given to be a Seal & testimony, wch Stand firm, thô ye may be decays in the Sense & power of it & ye we Should / [Ms. p. 10] so hold it & not Suspend our faith upon ye Sense of those testimonies, He farther directed us to Look— 1] To ye manner of our Sealing. That it is after believing much work done before to melt & mould ye Soul & fit it for X. 2] The marks of the Seal, An Agreeent wth ye word of God, ye heart turned to ye will of God, wth consent, Submission, & conformity, thô wth Difficulty of per formance, This Stamp beats out ye old Stamp, thô not perfectly & at once, yet ye ye heart is under ye Subduing work of ye Spirit, & thô he may be Overcome, yet it is ye wth we would not, but would Out wth all, And ye ye ye is a bent of hearts and inclination Godward; He Shewed ye those Impressions of God upon ye Soul are Seals & pledges ye we are Gods own, Thô never So Small yet ye were tokens between God & us & therefore we Should not lose ye comfort of ye My heart was much affected in the hearing of these things, God was pleased in Some measure to Clear up my Condition by ye, I found my heart in Some Comfortable measure to go along wth these testimonyes, wch was Some Encouragmt to me ye God had given me Some Earnest of ye heavenly Inheritance wch though it were Small, yet I ought to take as a pledge of the whole. Suddenly after it pleased God to Visit me wth a Sad & heavy Stroke in taking Away my wife, who was So near & dear unto me & had been So great an help and Comfort to me, whose Sober, Serious, conscienious & Self denying Conversation, was always a lively Testimony of the grace of God, & did always minister occasion of quickning unto me, thô Sad Cause I had to Lam my want of Improving So great an help

And God being pleased to Exercise my wife in her Sick ness with Some Sad Conflicts by means of bodily distemper Lying Sorely in her head, it did Exceedingly affect my heart, ye I Should have So provoked God, to Come wth So heavy a Stroke upon me, I Saw ye I had great need of an Awakening out of my Security, thô I could thrô Gods grace in Some measure Say ye I was not altogether at Ease & Quiet, in my prosperous Condition, wth God So Shined upon me, but was often thinking ye I must Expect Changes, wth way I knew not, yet very hard I found it to keep my heart from running out in pursuit of ye world in ye time of my prosperity; But this Sad hand of God Against me did dark my dreams of Outward prosperity & make me begin to think of nothing but Sorrow & affliction & ye now I must look to See no more comfortable days in this world; I

The word “so” is conjectural because the manuscript is frayed in this location.
found it very hard to bring my heart to Accept of this Solemn dispensation of God & Even ready to wish for Death; But God was pleased to help me to Consider, yt it was ye good pleasure of God So to deal with me, And yt as to ye mercy God had Shewed to my Soul, ye could be no other reason given of it, but only his meer good pleasure; And if it were ye Same good pleasure of God to afflict me, why Should it not be Acceptable to me, & yt it was Gods Infinite mercy if at ye last he did Save me from hell, wth ever he Should suffer me to meet in this world; I was much followed with Atheistical Temptations, Even ready to question whither yr were any Such happy Condition of Gods people or no, thô thrô Gods goodness ye did not very far prevail; But I was much troubled about my particular Condition, much fearing that this Sad hand of God was but a forerunner of my declining & falling off, I having found So much deadness & decaying while God did afford me So gracious an help, of So godly a yoke fellow, wth now being taken away I was in much more danger // [Ms. p. 11] of declining & falling off, I went to M' Rogers & told Him yt were ye fears of my heart, desiring to open all my heart to him, thô at ye time I had not Opportunity, yet then he told me yt I Ought not to give way to Such ungrounded fears, but if yr were anything grounded on Gods word, which were cause of fear, yt I Should out wth yt; I told him yt Comfort I had received it was by ye word of God, I tho' yt in Some measure of truth I might Say, yt if I were deceived it had been by ye word of God; M' Rogers told me yt it was good for me to hold there & wished me Ever to keep to that;

The Next morning in my waking & trembling tho' ye Lord was pleased affectingly to bring to my mind yt Text. 1. Pet. 1. 5. who are kept by ye power of God thrô faith unto Salvation. wth was much encourag'mt to me, I Saw yt I had need continually [to] Cry unto God to undertake for me & fly unto his faithful Covenant, wherein lay all my Safety; The next Lecture Day, M' Rogers in his prayer before Sermon, had very many Expressions So Suitable to my Condition, as yt he had Special reference for me therein, begging of God to undertake for his Serv, who were Sensible of ye own weakness, faintings, &c: my heart was much affected wth it & Encouraged thereby, And in ye Sermon, on Eph. 1. 18. yt the Eyes of your Understanding being Enlightened &c: he Shewing ye Spirit of revelation was Necessary, not only yt we might be able to know, but Actually to Conceive & Understand ye things of grace, And in his use of ye point he Shewed yt it was a Singular Evidence of Gods favour to those wth he had made to See these great things, yt he had made to See his Everlasting Love; to See X' Jesus; His meaning in ye promise to See ye actions of thy Faith, to See ye Everlasting Inheritance, Gods
meaning in his Chastisements; That God Secretly Expounds these things to ye Soul, 
which are but as parables to ye most hearers, But if God had given any these mani-
ifestations, it was an Effect of ye Spirit of revelation & a token of Blessedness; They were made of Gods privy Counsel. Mat. 13. 16. I was much Encouraged hereby, I found Gods Spirit much breathing in my heart in ye hearing of it & helping me to See ye God had been pleased by his Spirit, often in hearing of ye word & in Other Ordinances, to open these things in Some measure to my Soul; About this time my heart being full of trouble & disquieting thoughts, in respect of ye Loss of my wife & care Concerning my children, it pleased God one morning in my waking thoughts, to encourage me by Suggesting to my mind, in way of allusion ye Speech of the old man at Gibeah unto ye Levi. Judg. 19. 20. Let all thy wants be upon me, Only abide not in thy unbelief & distrust which took Some Impression upon me; The next week ye being a fast kept at Rowley, I was desirous to Enjoy ye Opportunity of humbling my Soul before God, being under his humbling providence, Being there I found my heart much affected with Mr. Rogers’s prayer, Esp: Some passages to this purpose, ye God was forced out of very faithfulness to his Servants, to Come with Sharp tryals, to cure ye corruptions, ye might not grow to Such Ulcers as Should be Incurable, I thou it was ye great mercy of God to me to take Any Course to recover me out of my Sinful Security. And in his Sermon he quoting. Psa: 61. 2. & Speaking of a godly man ye had found much Comfort from ye Text, upon a Special occasion, it falling in ye Course of his meditation, with duty of meditation I had been much wanting in, thô often Endeavouring to Set upon it, it pleased God upon ye hearing of that Example to Suggest to my mind about meditation, and asking his counsel he told me it would be a great help to me in ye duty to observe an order & course therein. Soon after I had farther Speech with Mr. Rogers & opening my heart unto him, I was more Encouraged (as also I had been by reading Mr. Shepherd’s Sound Believer) and telling Mr. Rogers how I had been wanting in meditation & daily walking with God, & was Suggested to my mind about meditation, and asking his counsel he told me it would

59William, b. Ipswich 27 May 1650, d. Dedham, 17 August 1685, and John. William’s memoir Descent from William Adams, Ipswich notes that his father’s estate “was distributed to the children, viz., one half to an eldest son, William and one fourth each to the two other children, when 21.” Genealogical sources suggest several possibilities for the identity of the third child. A good candidate is one Simon Adams, listed by Hammatt (Early Inhabitants of Ipswich, p. 10) as fathering a child in 1691; he died in 1723. In his will, Capt. Simon Stacy, Elisabeth’s brother, bequeaths property to his “cousin [i.e., close relation] Simon Adams.”

60The sound believer, or, a treatise of evangelical conversion (Edinburgh, 1645). Editions after 1650 used the modern spelling found here in the text.
be a very great help to me, to observe a method therein; wishing me yt w' Sermons I heard I Should thorowly think of y'm, & go along in Some principles of // [Ms. p. 12] religion, w' Course I Endeavoured to Set upon & found much help in it, after a weeks practice in this Course; The next Sabbath in ye morning having been reading in M' Shepherd's Sound Believer & repeating a Sermon of M' Philips,\(^61\) out of Col. 1.21. it pleased ye Ld very graciously to breath upon my heart thereby clearing up ye truth of ye work of his grace upon my Soul & much breaking of my heart w' all, to think yt G should bring Such an one as I into a State of reconciliation w' himself, who was an Enemy & as far gone from G by Sin as Ever any was; This Smile of G upon my Soul I lookt upon as an encouragm' to me to Endeavour to walk w' G.

In w' way I might Expect ye' presence of G and ye' manifestation of his favour to my Soul & to meet me upon his Sabbaths & in his Ordinances, yet I found it very hard to keep my heart w' any constancy in ye' way, thô G was pleased in Some measure to help me & keep my heart towards him w' more Seriousness & Constancy than formerly & to refresh my Soul often in Attending upon him in his ordinances: About this time One Speaking to me Concerning One yt had been of good Acco', yt it was feared was fallen, it Struck my heart w' an Exceeding great fear Concerning my Self, thinking yt it was almost Impossible yt' Ever I Should hold out, I could not Continue at my work, my heart was So troubled, but came home & retired my Self, Sadly thinking of my Condition & how justly G might Leave me, who had So Exceedingly Sinned against God, But it pleased G to Encourage me, bringing to my mind yt in, Isa. 42: 21. The Ld is well pleased for his righteousness Sake &c: yt' G was well pleased w' me for the Sake of X' Jesus & would not leave me. Another morning in my Sleep, tho' Came into my mind of a Young man, of wm it was Said yt he had left a maid wm he was in love w'm, it pleased God affectingly to Suggest to my mind (I wa king therew') yt' G would not So deal w'm, Sweetly brin ging to my mind yt' in Jer. 3. 1, 12. Òth thou hast gone after many Lovers yet return unto me &c: & I will not cause my anger to fall upon you, for I am merciful: A while after as I was Imployed in my calling & was thinking upon a Sermon preached by M' Hubbard upon. Rev. 2. 7. To him yt' Overcometh will I give to eat of ye tree of Life &c: w' Eating he Shewed did note an Immediate fruition of

\(^61\)Samuel Philips (1625–96), born at Boxford, Essex, and graduated from Harvard College in 1651, was ordained teacher at Rowley in 1652. The MHS holds copies of some of his later sermons, possibly in his own hand; Adams appears to have a copy of, or his own notes from, Philips's sermon.
Xt in heaven, my heart was much taken up with ye happy Condition of my wife, who was gotten Safe thò this evill world & Enjoying ye Immediate fruition of God and Xt, it pleased G much to Encourage me yt it would not be long but I also Should enjoy ye Same, wth did ravish my heart to think of those Ineffable Joys & pleasures at Gods right hand & yt blessed Communion of my Soul wth Xt my head; And coming home at Noon I was looking into Mr Bolton’s62 Directi ons for a Xns walking wth God & Lighting upon a place wth he ad viseth a Christian often to be Looking into ye glory of Heaven by meditation upon yt Everlasting Bliss, to think of yt Everlasting Communion wth Xt, ye Angels & glorified Saints & yt Beatifick Vision of God himself, Once in a day at lest, thus to cast up ye Eye of his faith upon yt never fading Crown of Life, wth wth in an inch of time Should Eternally rest upon his head, yt it would be a no table help to keep ye heart heavenward & wth delight to walk wth G, This did much affect my heart, it So Concurring wth yt I had been thinking of beforehand & God having given me a tast of ye goodness of Such a practice; And many other breathings of Gods Spirit I found in his Ordinances: But I found Satan Exceedingly Labouring to Overthrow me by Spiriu tal pride, wth G Enlarged me, I found my Self So Exceeding apt to have Overweening tho’ of my self and wth G had done for me yet it pleased G to help me to be Striving against these tho’ thò I was Exceedingly followed wth ye; Then it pleased G to let loose Again upon me Some Strong Corruption, wth for merly I had been most overtaken wth, wth by I Saw more into ye Vileness of my Corrupt Nature & had Cause to loath my Self for ye Sins of my best Dutyes & was Somtimes ready to question whither all I did were not in hypocrisy, yet G did not leave me wth out Some tokens of his grace & help me in Some measure to be Clinging unto Xt Jesus, wth out whose help & grace, I Saw I was undone for Ever. // [Ms. p. 13]

Elisabeth Adams (formerly Stacey)  
deceased Apr. 2d 1655, Aged 31.

Wth I was about 15 or 16 years of Age, it pleased God to Convince me of my Ignorance of ye word of God & of the Scriptures & then I thò I would give my Self to rea ding yt thereby I might Come to more knowledge, but I found it to be very wearisom & tedious to me, yt I knew not how to keep on in Such a way; Then I thò yt if I could keep from

great Sins & Live Civilly, I Should go to heaven, thô I had not So much Knowledge & y° I Should not need to Labour for more knowledge; But Soon after it pleas ed God to let me fall into Some Sins w° I tho° were very great & then I was afraid y° I Should go to hell; Then I Set upon reading, to See if I could find, whither Ever God pardoned Such Sins or no; And reading y° Book of Francis Spira,° They who came to him, told him w° great Sins y° prophets David Committed & others in Scripture Committed great Sins & yet God pardoned y° Sins. But he answered y° y° were y° Elect, but God would never have mercy on him.

There I understood y° none but y° Elect were Saved; I tho° y° I was none of y° Elect, for then I tho° y° God would never have Suffered me So to Sin, I tho° y° in all y° Ever I did, I Sinned Against God; If I were at y° performance of Duties or went to hear y° word, I tho° y° I heaped up wrath Against y° day of wrath; I felt Such horror of conscience y° I could not Endure to be alone, for I Concluded y° I Should go to hell; But there came to my mind y° place Rom. 9.18. that God hath mercy on whom he will have mer cy & w° he will he hardeneth. I tho° y° hardening was w° a Soul was in its natural Condition & was not Sensible of it, but I tho° y° I was Sensible of my Condition, w° was Some Encouragm° to me; A while after Mr. Norton Shew ed y° it was as Easie w° y° Lord Jesus, to pardon a great Sinner as y° least & therefore y° greatness of Sins Should not discourage Any; And other Encouragm° I had by y° word & Sometimes convictions; A while after my Father fell Sick & Mr. Rogers Coming to see him, he told me y° we had need to pray to God to Spare his Life, for it might be for our Sins y° God might take him Away, I did not at y° present much mind his words, but after my father was dead° I was much Troubled about y, because y° were Spoken to me, as if it were for my Sins Only, However I tho°

°Possibly Relation of the fearefull estate of Francis Spira (London, 1638), which relates the tale of a Venetian lawyer who accepts the Reformation, publicly recants under pressure from the Roman Catholic church in 1548, and dies that same year in extreme anguish.
°Compare to William’s lack of “terror,” ms. p. 3, above.
°Hammatt has Simon Stacy in Ipswich “a commoner in 1641. He died before 1649. We find under date of ‘Feb. 22, 1649, granted unto Widow Stace, on half of a parcel of meadow lying by Mr. Saltonstall’s farm’” (Early Inhabitants of Ipswich, p. 343). Mary Walton Ferris, however, infers that Stacy had died by 1644 based on a reference that year to the “Widow Stacy” (Dawes-Gates Ancestral, p. 558). Given William’s reference to Norton’s sermon on Heb. 8 (see above, ms. p. 5, which can be dated to August 1645), Ferris’s earlier date has credence, further substantiated by the fact that the December 1648 subscription for Major Denison’s military services does not list Simon Stacy (as it does both William Adamses). The 1644 death date for Simon Stacy raises the distinct possibility that the events Elisabeth depicts all occurred before her marriage.
y't I had ye greatest Share in it; Then I was trou bled how to know w't Sin it Should be. And y'n next Sabbath M'r Norton had a proof in Isa: 51. 14. The Captive Exile hasteneth y'h he may be loosed &c: & Another in. Hos. 13. 13. Ephraim is an unwise son &c: I tho' y'i I was not like y'e Captive Exile, but like Ephraim lazy and Slothful.

I tho' it was for y' Sin & then I tho' y' I would not give way to my Slothfulness, but pray more & Set upon Some reformation; But after y' I tho' y' I had Such an hard heart: About y' time M'r Norton having a proof out of Ezek. 36. [26] I will take Away ye heart of Stone & give an heart of flesh & put my Spirit w'th in you & write my law in your hearts & I will be your God & ye Shall be my people. I tho' I might receive this promise y' God would be my God & I Should be his; I tho' y' then my con dition was good; A while after I went to live w'th M'r Rogers of Rowley & my master was very Earnest to know how it was w'th me, At length I told him Somthing; He told me that he would not Discourage me, he hop // [Ms. p. 14] ed y' there might be Some work of God in me, But afterward he told me, y' I tho' because I had been wounded for Sin, y' presently y'n work was done & I had gotten X't but it was Another manner of work & So I would find it if Ever God let me know w't belonged to it, & he told me y' if I Continued Constant in Seeking X't daily, it may be I might find him, but Otherwise I might happen to go w'th out him: His Speech did Even Amaze me & much trouble me, But after y't I had been there a While I Saw more w't belonged to y'n godly Life; And hearing M'r Rogers at Ipswich on ye Lecture days, concerning y'n X'ns daily walk, I tho' I could not so much as keep my heart with God in Dutyes & therefore much less all y'n day long; And Considering y' my master being a mes senger of God, knew better than I did w't my Condition was, it did So Discourage me y' I was ready to give Over all; But y' place of Scripture came to my mind y' those w'ch Seek shall find, [Matt. 7:8] it was Some Encouragm't to me to use the means & Seek, But I tho' I found y' God did not regard me, w'ch did much trouble me, yet I thought God might intend Some good to me, having brought me into Such a family, where I Enjoyed So much means, but then tho' again it might be to increase my Sin & make me fit for destruction; But I tho' I would wait in ye use of means; And because God had promised y't y'n y' Seek Shall find and I did Seek & yet did not find, I tho' it was because I was not Earnest Enough; a while after I asked a godly man,

66It seems likely that, even if Elisabeth worked as a servant, she was offered a position in the Rogerses' household to support her in her grief. Ezekiel Rogers's first concern for her, she notes, is spiritual.
how a Soul might know wⁿ yⁿ were earnest Enough in Seeking yᵗ God might fulfill yᵗ promise, He told me yᵗ he had heard a minister Speak to it thus, yᵗ if a Soul weighing that wⁿ all other things found yᵗ to be yⁿ greatest; it did much Encourage me to wait on God; A while after, it was Shewed in a Sermon yᵗ yⁿ who wait for a promise, God will in his time Send one; I thoᵗ yᵗ I had not had So much horror of conscience as Some had & therefore was not fit to receive a promise; About yᵗ time upon Some occasion I came to Ipswich on the Lords Day & hearing Mr Norton on Rom. 10. 4.⁶⁷ the last words of it, he Shew ed yᵗ it was yⁿ Duty of Every one to believe in Xᵗ & answering an objection yᵗ a Soul might make, yᵗ yⁿ found yᵗ God had Enlightned yᵐ & Convinced yᵐ of their Sins, but yⁿ found not So much horror of Conscience as Some do, & therefore were afraid to believe, he Answered yᵗ true Humiliation did not Consist in Honor of Conscience, for yⁿ Devills were terrified Enough & yet yⁿ could not be lieve, & yᵗ God did dispense the measure of Humiliation on Diversely, as he pleased, This was Some Encouragement unto me; Afterwards in hearing yⁿ word of God wⁿ in warning was given to Souls to take heed of receiving comfort too Soon, I thoᵗ I was willing to wait Gods time if God would but at last Come in: But after this I grew into a Slight & Negligent frame, as thô I did not regard wⁿ became of me; A while after one last day of yⁿ week at night, my master Shewed yᵗ yⁿ were in an ill Condition, who had gotten nothing all yⁿ week & I thoᵗ yᵗ I had not only not gained, but lost, This much troubled me & I thoᵗ yᵗ it was a Sign yᵗ I was a reprobate, because I profited not under So much means but rather grew worse, I thoᵗ it was better for me to give Over using means, because it is Said yᵗ yⁿ prayer of yⁿ wicked is Abomination, I knew not how to bear yⁿ Condition I was in, yet I could not help my Self out of it. That place // [Ms. p. 15] Mat. 11. [28] come to me &c: was Encouragement to me to use yⁿ means Mr Miller⁶⁸ Shewed, yᵗ wⁿ a Soul is broᵗ to be Low & vile in its own eyes, it is a fit object for G to work upon; I thoᵗ yᵗ if G had made [men]⁶⁹ fit for himself to work upon, he would also work his work in me

Mr N. Rogers preaching at Rowley, Shewed yᵗ a Soul must be divorced from its first Husband all Sin & Lust, before it will close wⁿ Xᵗ, and yᵗ

⁶⁷William may have been present at this sermon; see ms. pp. 2 and 6, above.
⁶⁸Most likely John Miller: ruling elder of Roxbury, 1637–39; assistant minister in Rowley, 1639, as well as first town clerk; he moved away from Ipswich in 1641 and died 1663. Elisabeth is perhaps harking back to John Miller, or he may have returned to guest lecture, as he is noted doing in 1645 in Notes on Sermons.
⁶⁹Conjectural reading.
great reason why So many came Short, was because ye could not bear ye Cutting off: I tho' I was not thorowly divorc ed from all, but Some Lust was yet remaining; I knew not whither it were in my power to divorce my Self; The next day I asked a godly man, he told me ye a great matter lay in ye will; I tho' I was willing: A while after I returned home to my mother,70 at ye time ye was Some fear of Indians, I tho' if war should come,71 I was in a Sad condition, for I had not gotten any thing wch I could trust to in a point of Salvation, but if I Should then die, I Should go to Hell; I tho' I had broken all Gods Laws & now my Sins were much ag gravated by Living under So much means; There was So much Con fusion in my Soul, y' I tho' it was Impossible, I Should Ever attain to ye pardon of my Sins & peace of Conscience; Soon after Mr Rogers in his Sermon, had a use of Encouragm7 to such as were Shut up in Sin & knew not how to get Out, he Shewed ye L. J. was a mediator to go between G & man, to purchase pardon & deliverance at G's hand, This did Encourage me much ye G had Shewed me a way to get out; But he Shewing how ye Soul must be divorced from all Sin, before it could Close wth X', I tho' ye was one Lust wch I Should never get rid of; I was then Even ready to Despair; Soon after I went to Mr Rogers & made my Condition known to him;72 He told me ye was One Step to heaven & bid me ye should not Shake off ye yoke but humble my Self under G's hand & he would lift me up in due time & bid me not to be discouraged; Reading ye place in Mat. ye The Kingdom of Heaven Suffereth Violence & ye violent take it by force, [Matt. 11:12] I was much troubled ye I was no more Earnest and Constant in Seeking as I Should be. After this M'
Rogers out of Eph. 5. 32. had an use of Encouragm't to poor Souls y' would fain come to X but could not, That God could persuade y' heart & remove the op position of the will & Exhorted Such to Seek to G to do it & y' G would do it for y'm; It was encouragm't to me, because I could pray to G.

But afterwards I could not pray, then I tho' my Condition was worse than Ever & y' now G had left me. The next Sabbath M' Norton preaching out of Rom. 10. 14. How Shall y' preach ex cept they be Sent he quoted Luke. 4. [25–26]

Many widows were in Is rael, but to none of y'm was Elias Sent, Save to ye widow of Sarep ta, He Shewed y' God Sends y' ministry to y' Lost & widowed Soul y' is far off & unable to get out of its Sins & Corruptions, y' God would give y'm faith & X freely & God freely offered X' to Such Soul & therefore wo would be to y'm if y' rejected it. This was Some Encouragm't to me, and in y' afternoon, M' Rogers on. Eph. 5 32. Shewing how G breaks all false Contracts & ways of Self Salva tion w'ch y' Soul is apt to take, I found y' G had So dealt w' th me,

In y' Latter End of his Sermon he came to an use of encouragm't [to] Such Souls y' G had So dealt w' th al, It was because God would not have y'm lose y' Souls, but would bring y'm off from all to X', This was great Encouragm't to me; But a little after M' Norton Shewed y' such a Soul as G had not Spoken peace unto, all y' y' did was Accursed; And hearing my master Rogers, y' Such a Soul as was [not] reconciled to God, all y' Judgm'ts pronounced in y' Book of God did hang over y' heads. These things did much discourage me y' I tho' I Should never get to heaven, I Saw So many discouragm'ts in the way, And I found y' I had Such a vile heart, w'ch I tho' it was Impossible y' Ever it Should be Changed; And finding my heart [so] bad, I tho' y' Came from me must needs be So too, y' I was tempted to give over Seeking to God, but I tho' y' if I Should give over Seeking I Should Certainly perish, but if I Continued Seeking it may be I might find; A while after y' being a fast to be kept I was afraid it might be to my hardning, I being So vile; Then I went to M' Rogers & told him how it was w' th me; He told me y' may be I was not So Vile in Gods Eyes & y' I must not give way to Such temptations, for

73See William's mention of Eph. 5:32, ms. pp. 4–5, above.
74See William, ms. p. 5, above.
75Conjectural reading.
76Conjectural reading.
77Conjectural reading.
78See William, ms. p. 9, above.
all things were possible to God; It was much Encouragemt to me; And yt fast Day God did discover to me, that those who Seek in truth Shall find, I then resolved, wt ever discour agemts I met wt al never to give Over, but if I did perish, to per ish in a way of Seeking God; A while after, reading in yt Souls preparation for X,79 yt those who are Slight and Overly in confesSing their Sins are but hypocrites, I tho' I had not been So Free in Confessing my Sins, as I ought to have been & there- // [Ms. p. 16] fore feared yt I was but an hypocrite; I feared also yt I was guilty of ye Sin Against ye Holy Ghost. I made it known to Mr Rogers, he told me wt yt Sin was, where by I Understood yt I was not guilty of it, But I tho' yt I was yet Under ye curse of God & yt all his Judgmts Hung over my head, wt my heart was much affected, Especially one Sabbath day morning, But I tho' wt my Self (tho I could not Conceive wt way I Should Ever receive mercy or Comfort) yt God was able to do more, than I was able to conceive of. That Sabbath Mr Norton preaching out of Rom. 10. 15. He had an use of Encouragmt to Such as were Sensible yt were Nothing, He Shewed yt it was ye very Condi tion wherein Xt closeth wt his Elect; I tho' yt I was in yt condition So yt it was much Encouragmt Unto me; yet afterw ards I Saw more of my Own Heart & miserable Condition by nature yt I tho' it was Just wt G to leave me & I did not know but yt he would; But Mr Norton Shewing out of Rom. 10. 20. wt a lost Estate was & yt a Soul in yt Estate, was in ye next Disposi tion to be found of X, I tho' I was Lost, It did much Stay my heart, And m' Rogers preaching out of Isa: 53.1. did much Encourage those Souls, yt were in Such a Condition (as I found I was in) to believe in Xt it did much Encourage me yt God did require of me to believe; I tho' yt it was not in my power to believe, But faith it was ye gift of God, And being told yt God did hear those prayers yt were made for faith, it did encourage me to beg of G yt he would work faith in my heart; But afterward I could not So much as pray for faith; Then I tho' my Condition very bad & that I was an hypocrite; But Mr Rogers Shewing how far an hypocrite might See into Heaven, Yet not So far as to part wt his Lustrs, I tho' I was willing to part wt all & glad if I could be rid of ym, yt I might become partaker of X Jesus; A while after my master Rogers was Desirous to know of me, how God had gone along wt me, when I told him, He Answered yt it was a great Degree to prize X above all & to be willing to part wt all for him and yt he did not question but yt God had given me faith, tho I knew it not, but in Gods time I Should know it;

But yet I found so little power against my corruptions, y’ I was afraid I deceived my self & others; But Mr. Norton preaching out of Rom. 11. 17. Shewed y’ such a soul y’ was as a branch cut off, God did require of y’m immediately to be lieve, I then feared to stand out any longer, yet I knew not how to believe: In hearing y’e word I met with some rebukes for standing out against God’s invitations, w’ch did affect me, y’ God’s invitations would not prevail, but he was forced to come w’th threatnings; Yet I questioned whither I might believe or not, but considering y’e faithfulness of God & y’e truth of his word, y’ J. X’t came to seek & to save such lost souls as I was, it did encourage me to depend on X’t for salvation;

A while after Mr. Rogers shewing y’ such souls as had been bro’t to depend on X’t for salvation, were in a good estate, thò y’ faith were not so clear, he quoted y’ place. John. 6. 37. He y’ cometh to me I will in no wise cast out, this did very much cheer my heart & encourage me to seek after God y’ he would more manifest himself unto me; Afterwards Mr. Rogers shewed y’ such a soul as God had drawn to X’t & y’ did not there rest, but was following on to know more of him, there was no condemnation to such a soul. Rom. 8. 1. it did much take up my heart w’th admiration at God’s mercy shewed unto me; And afterward Mr. Rogers shewed out of Eph. 2. 10. y’ where God had begun his good work, he would also perfect it, this did much encourage me, y’ as God had begun his good work in my soul, so he would also carry it on; Yet since I have found many doubtings & questionings in my heart w’th also I have found in some measure to be answered by the word, of God.

80Elisabeth’s last mention of Norton, who departed in 1653, comes very near the end of her account, and of course she died in 1655.

81At the bottom of the page, in a later hand, is written “101.137 [indecipherable word] Henry Channing, Oct. 27 1836.”