



Memoranda and Documents

TWO SEVENTEENTH-CENTURY CONVERSION NARRATIVES FROM IPSWICH, MASSACHUSETTS BAY COLONY

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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."¹ To date, the most thoroughgoing primary source for seventeenth-century lay religious narratives is the series of "confessions" recorded by minister Thomas Shepard.² 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.

¹I 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.

²*Thomas Shepard's Confessions*, ed. George Selement and Bruce C. Woolley, vol. 58 of the Publications of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts (Boston, 1981). For additional relations taken in Shepard's hand, see Mary Rhinelander McCarl, "Thomas Shepard's Record of Relations of Religious Experience, 1648–1649," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 48 (July 1991): 432–66.

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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.³ 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.⁴ 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.’”⁵ 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.⁶

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 1635.⁷ No other Ipswich residents appear to have been aboard that vessel with William.⁸ The best information on William Adams’s emigration can be found in the

³Roger Thompson, *Mobility and Migration: East Anglian Founders of New England, 1629–1640* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1994), p. 75.

⁴David Grayson Allen, *In English Ways: The Movement of Societies and the Transfer of English Local Law and Custom to Massachusetts Bay in the Seventeenth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1981), p. 192.

⁵William Hunt, *The Puritan Moment: The Coming of Revolution in an English County* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1983), p. 239.

⁶Thompson, *Mobility and Migration*, pp. 193–94.

⁷James Savage, *A Genealogical Dictionary of The First Settlers of New England*, 4 vols. (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Company, 1965), 1:16–17.

⁸Allen, *In English Ways*, appendix 4, pp. 269–79.

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."⁹

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.¹⁰ 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.¹¹ 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 thereabouts of land on the south side of the river by John Addams."¹² 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.¹³

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

¹⁰For the Bocking connection, see Deborah Hart Stock, "Thomas Hooker's Journey through English Congregationalism to the New England Way," *International Congregational Journal* 3 (February 2003): 74, and Thompson, *Migration and Mobility*, p. 187.

¹¹Clarence Almon Torrey, *New England Marriages Prior to 1700* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Company, 1994), p. 6. Torrey indicates that his evidence for the date range is not solid.

¹²Abraham Hammatt, *The Hammatt Papers: Early Inhabitants of Ipswich, Massachusetts, 1633–1700* (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Company, 1980), p. 9.

¹³Allen, *In English Ways*, table 13, p. 134; Robert von Friedeburg, "Social and Geographical Mobility in the Old World and New World Communities: Earls Colne, Ipswich and Springfield, 1636–1685," *Journal of Social History* (Winter 1995): 382.

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).”¹⁴ 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.¹⁵

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.¹⁶ 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.’”¹⁷ At Anne Hutchinson’s

¹⁴Blaine Whipple, *History and Genealogy of “Elder” John Whipple of Ipswich, Massachusetts: His English Ancestors and American Descendants* (Victoria, Canada: Trafford Publishing, 2004), p. 54.

¹⁵I 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.

¹⁶Allen, *In English Ways*, p. 119.

¹⁷Philip F. Gura, *A Glimpse of Zion’s Glory: Puritan Radicalism in New England, 1620–1660* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1984), pp. 26–27, and John Winthrop, *Winthrop Papers*. (Boston: Massachusetts Historical Society, 1929–), 3:216

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 Adamases' 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 Adamases 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 Adamases' 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

¹⁸David D. Hall, ed., *The Antinomian Controversy, 1636-1638: A Documentary History* (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1968), pp. 317, 325, 338-39.

¹⁹Quoted in Samuel Eliot Morison, *Builders of the Bay Colony* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1930), pp. 271-72.

²⁰Cotton Mather, *Magnalia Christi Americana* (Hartford: Silas Andrus and Son, 1855; reprinted, Michigan Historical Reprint Series), vol. 1, bk. 3, p. 301.

analyzing the experiences of the Puritan laity in New England.²¹ The confessions, along with similar accounts found in the diaries of Michael Wigglesworth and John Fiske, come to us via ministers.²² 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."²³

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 brief²⁴—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

²¹Thomas Shepard's Confessions, ed. Selement and Woolley and "Thomas Shepard's Record," McCarl. On professions of saving grace as requirements for full church membership, see Edmund S. Morgan, *Visible Saints: The History of a Puritan Idea* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1963); Patricia Caldwell, *The Puritan Conversion Narrative: The Beginning of American Expression* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1983); Charles Lloyd Cohen, *God's Caress: The Psychology of Puritan Religious Experience* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1986); Michael G. Dittmore, "Preparation and Confession: Reconsidering Edmund S. Morgan's Visible Saints," *New England Quarterly* 67 (June 1994): 298–314; Charles E. Hambrick-Stowe, *The Practice of Piety: Puritan Devotional Disciplines in Seventeenth-Century New England* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1982); George Selement, "The Meeting of Elite and Popular Minds at Cambridge, New England, 1638–1645," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 41 (January 1984): 32–48; Raymond Phineas Stearns and David Holmes Brawner, "New England Church 'Relations' and Continuity in Early Congregational History," *American Antiquarian Society Proceedings*, vol. 75 (Worcester, Mass., 1965), pp. 13–45; Baird Tipson, "Invisible Saints: The 'Judgement of Charity' in the Early New England Churches," *Church History* 44 (1975): 460–71.

²²Edmund S. Morgan, ed., "The Diary of Michael Wigglesworth, 1653–1657: The Conscience of a Puritan," *Transactions, 1942–46*, vol. 35 of Publications of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts (Boston, 1951), pp. 311–444; reprint edition (New York: Harper & Row-Torchbook, 1965); Robert G. Pope, ed., *The Notebook of the Reverend John Fiske, 1644–1657*, vol. 47 of Publications of the Colonial Society of Massachusetts (Boston, 1974).

²³Michael McGiffert, *God's Plot: Puritan Spirituality in Thomas Shepard's Cambridge* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1994), p. 136.

²⁴Selement, "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.²⁵ 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.²⁶ 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.

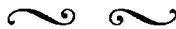
²⁵I am grateful to Douglas Winiarski, author of "Experiencing Conversion in New England" (in *A People's History of Christianity: Modern Christianity to 1900*, ed. Amanda Porterfield [Minneapolis, Minn.: Augsburg Fortress Press, 2007]), for urging me to distinguish the Adamses' narratives from typical 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.

²⁶Baird Tipson, "The Routinized Piety of Thomas Shepard's Diary," *Early American Literature* 13 (1978): 64-80.

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.²⁷ 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.²⁸ 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.



WILLIAM ADAMS OF IPSWICH. AN ACCO^T OF HIS EXPERIENCES;
 TRANSCRIBED FROM HIS OWN HANDWRITING.
 HE DYED JAN. 1659.²⁹

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

²⁷Channing’s gift is noted in the Society’s *Proceedings, 1835–1855*, first series, vol. 2 (Boston: The Society, 1880), p. 39, 59.

²⁸Eliphalet Adams, New London, Conn., to Mrs. Dorothy Noyes, Stonington, Conn., 21 July 1720, Connecticut Historical Society.

²⁹In 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 Hooker³⁰ & hearing of y^e misery of all men by Nature and of a work of conversion & believing in Christ, w^{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 y^e 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^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. 24th & 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 wth 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^t I was in the way of Seeking after God & deluding my Self wth 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^{ch} yet were quenched by the Love of Sin & power of Corruption in my Soul, w^{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^{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^r Norton,³¹ out of

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

³¹William 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, y^t it is not in him y^t willeth or in him y^t runneth, but in God y^t Sheweth mercy, I had many reasonings in my heart, concerning the justness of Gods proceeding wth man, thinking y^t 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 y^t God from Eternity had determined y^e Everlasting estate of every man & y^t absolutely & y^t this will of God was unchangeable; But it pleased God by the preaching of M^r Norton, out of y^e 20th & 21st verses of y^t 9th of y^e Romans, *Nay but, O man, who art thou y^t replyest against God?* &c:

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

I found my heart Exceeding hard & Impenitent, Shut up in Contumacy & rebellion, w^{ch} I feared y^t it was a conseq^t of Gods eternal rejection of me, as was Shewed by Mr Norton out of the 22^d verse of Rom: 9th, That though reprobation were not y^e 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, y^t 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 y^t I Should never obtain mercy & oftentimes Even ready to give Over Seeking after God & to Conclude y^t I Should one day perish by my Sins; But it pleased God to carry me on in a way of hope by y^t Text Joel. 2.14. *who can tell, if God will return* &c: & Several other places of Scripture, Somtimes by One & Somtimes by Another, as by y^e Example of y^e Ninevites Jonah. 3.4. & Ezra: 10:2, *Yet y^r is hope in Israel concerning this.* Isa: 1.18. Ezek: 20.9, 14, 22. Isa: 43.25. w^r by I was Somw^t encouraged y^t thô y^e 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 Names Sake Shew mercy unto me; And God was pleased to

help me to plead his Covenant^t w^{ch} he had made wth 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 Scarce make one petition Unto God, but Even Smite upon my breast & wth y^e words of the publican, cry *Lord be merciful to me a Sinner*, [Luke 18:13]³² 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^t if Ever there were any profanehearted Esau³³ I was one, who had Sold away my Heavenly priviledges for base Lusts & therefore now Should have no Share in y^t grace & mercy w^{ch} I had So Slighted & rejected; Those words of X^t³⁴ would often come into my mind *O Generation of Vipers, how can ye escape y^e Damnation of Hell*, [Matt. 22:33]³⁵ many times wishing y^t I had never been born & would have been glad to have been annihilated or made Nothing To bear y^e wrath of God I Saw it was Intolerable & for me to avoid it I tho^t it was Impossible; For altho^h by the ministry of the word, I heard y^t there was mercy wth God // [Ms. p. 3] for y^e greatest Sinners, yet I tho^t that my Case was Extra ordinary, my Sins were so great & committed wth So many circumstances and Aggravation; Against So much Light & Convictions of my own Conscience & y^e motions of Gods spirit, And hearing of y^e work of Gods grace upon Offices, w^{ch} I had tho^t Slightly of before, it did much affect my heart & Caused me to apply those words of X^t to myself, y^t y^e *publicans* & *har lots entred into the Kingdom of heaven*, [Matt. 21:31] but I Should be Shut out; I tho^t y^t I was like y^t Son who Said to his father, he *would go into y^e Vineyard*, but *went not*, [Matt. 21:30] wⁿ Others who had not made So fair promises, went before me; I was many times ready to Conclude y^t y^e time of grace was past wth me & y^t my Condition was now grown hopeless; when I heard any Doctrine Concerning believing in X^t, I could not Any whit hearken to it, I thought y^t it belonged not unto me, Especially, hearing M^r Norton out of, Rom. 9th, verse 33^d, *Whosoever believeth in him Shall not be ashamed*. He Shewing from thence y^t there was Salvation in X^t for y^e

³²Bracketed 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 y^t there was mercy for Such Sinners as I was. But I tho^t that it belonged not to me, for I was not yet Humbled; I tho^t y^t I had not any preparation to faith, y^t I had not So much as felt y^e 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 of³⁶ at y^e Beginning of y^r Conversion; I thought y^t y^r could be no work of Conversion, but y^e first beginning of it must be in Such a manner; my heart was much affected herewth, that though I was Convinced y^t there was grace in X^t for all y^t did believe in him & y^t it was not y^e greatness of my Sins y^t could hinder, yet I had nothing to do therewth; I tho^t I was far off from any mercy; Like unto y^e prodigal I had gone farther from God than any had, but Unlike him in his returning; I thought y^t others might apply y^t grace y^t was offered in X^t, but I might not, ofttimes ready to Conclude wth those, in Ezek: 37.[11] that my *hope* was *Lost* and y^t I for *my part was Cut off*, I was like to him y^t owed 10000 talents, but find nothing to pay.³⁷ But it pleased God Mr Norton preaching out of Rom: 10. 4.³⁸ X^t is y^e End of y^e Law for righteousness to Every one y^t believeth, He shew ing from thence y^t Every Believer hath only, & fully in X^t, all y^e righteousness required in the Law & y^t it was y^e Duty of Every one y^t hears y^e gospel to Believe in X^t, and y^t it was all one wth X^t to take away y^e Sins of the greatest Sinner, as of the lest Babe; And likewise y^e great Sin of Unbelief, y^t it was a greater Sin not to believe in X^t, than it was to kill X^t &c: He also Shewed w^t measure of Humiliation did dispose y^e Soul to believing, That true Humiliation, it did not consist in Terror of Conscience, For y^e Devills were terrified Enough yet could not believe, But y^t true Humiliation consisted in y^e right Acknowledgm^t of the Law of God, y^t God might Justly Condemn the Soul for its Sins, y^t y^e mouth be Stopped & have nothing to Say against God; And in Acknow ledgm^t of y^e gospel, y^t if God Save y^e Soul, it is from his free grace & mercy in X^t & So a Despair of Salvation from any thing but only y^e free grace and mercy of God in X^t, He shewed y^t it was y^e Duty of Such Souls So to attend to y^e work of humiliati on, as yet to be Labouring to believe in X^t: I could not deny but y^t I had found Such a work of Humiliation in my heart & was thereby Convinced y^t 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.

³⁷Matt. 18:24-25.

³⁸Elisabeth appears to have been present at this same sermon; see below ms p. 14.

in X^t; Likewise considering y^e general & Inde finite tender of y^e Gospel to all, wth out Exception, I was Som what more Encouraged to wait upon God in y^e use of means, though I tho^t if Any were Excluded I Should, Yet I was Encouraged by y^t word of God. Rom: 10. 9. *If thou shalt Confess wth thy mouth & believe in thy heart* &c: M^r Norton shewing y^t these words, *If thou*, did note Every particular person w^t soever or w^t Sinner Soever, y^t if they did believe in X^t they Should be Saved; Yet I thought I must first // [Ms. p. 4] get power Against my Sins & corruptions, before I might lay hold on X^t, w^{ch} I found I was utterly unable to do, my Sins being grown So Habitual. It pleased God to bring into my mind, Somthing w^{ch} I had formerly heard by M^r Shephard³⁹ preaching out of Mark. 5. 25, 26. con cerning y^e woman who had y^e bloody issue,⁴⁰ w^{ncc} he not ed y^t there was Sufficient Virtue in y^e Lord J. X^t to cure old & Inveterate Evills, though She had been long diseas ed & had Spent all y^t She had upon Physicians & was noth ing Bettered, but rather grew worse (w^{ch} I tho^t was my condition) yet one touch of X^t would Cure all; yet af ter this it pleased God to let me fall Again & then I tho^t my Condition worse than Ever, y^t now I was Condemned both by Law & Gospel & had now Sinned Against y^t reme dy & therefore now there was no mercy for me, I was for y^e Space of a fortnight full of very Sad fears, & ready to give over y^e means, thinking y^t I Should never obtain mer cy; One time Especially, going alone to prayer, I was rea dy to turn back, thinking y^t it was but in vain, y^t 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 y^t if I Should turn my back upon God, y^t were to Cut y^e throat of my own Soul & to make my Condemnation Sure & I could not tell but y^t God might yet have mercy upon me, y^t yet there might be hope, though I tho^t y^t it was y^e most forlorn hope y^t Ever any had; Thus it pleased God to keep me waiting upon him; The Next Sabbath day, M^r Nor ton being to preach out of Rom: 10.13, *Whosoever Shall call on y^e 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 y^e Terret of the meet Ing house, Where I could only hear y^e Sound of his Voice, w^{ch} did much affect my heart, I tho^t y^t now God did Even deprive me of y^e means w^{ch} Should do me good. But it pleased God in y^e Afternoon M^r

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.

Rogers⁴¹ preaching out of Eph. 5. 32.⁴² Concerning y^e mystical marriage & having Spoken concerning y^e Divorcing of y^e Soul from Sin and being Speaking of God, drawing y^e Soul unto X^t, w^{ch} is done by discovering of Salvation to be in X^t, He shewed y^t X^t Comes in y^e gospel, preaching Salvation to poor Sinners & thô by our Sins we had destroyed Ours^s, yet in X^t there is help Hos. 13.9. And thô we have fallen by our Iniquity, yet we may be raised by X^t Hos. 14.1. Jer: 3:1. That though y^e guilt of our Sins Stood in our way as y^e Law of y^e medes & persians [Dan. 6:12] w^{ch} altered not, yet God gives poor Sinners liberty to plead for y^r Lives, as y^e Jews. Est. 8.11. He did much Encourage poor, lost and one Sinners, to Set y^m s^s to Seek mercy at Gods hands; This did much affect my heart & gave me greater Encouragm^t than Ever I had before & Caused me more Earnestly to be Seeking after X^t; I was also Encouraged by y^t in John. 3. 14,15,16,17. I Conside red if *Whosoever*, then God had not Excluded me, Likewise Acts. 10.41 & 1. Tim. 1.15,16. And in y^e next Sermon upon, Eph. 5. 32. I was farther Encouraged, M^r Rogers quoting, Heb. 7. 25. y^t X^t is able to Save to y^e uttermost &c: Though I had Sinned to ye Uttermost & Stood it out to y^e Uttermost, & Looking into. Luke. 15, concerning y^e prodi gal, y^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^t thô I had run far from God & Spent all y^e Talents w^{ch} God had bestowed on me upon my Lusts, yet God was ready wth Compassion to receive & Embrace me return ing unto him; After this M^r Norton preaching out of Rom 10.15.⁴³

⁴¹There 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.

⁴²The 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.

⁴³See Elisabeth’s reference to Rom. 10.14 and this same line on ms p. 15, below.

*How Shall y^y preach except y^y be Sent?*⁴⁴ Shewing y^t wth out a divine mission y^r could be no // [Ms. p. 5] effectual revelation of X^t to a lost Soul, quoting. Luke. 4 25, 26.⁴⁴ *many widows were in Israel &c: but to none of y^m was Elias Sent, Save to the widow of Serepta*, he shewed, y^t wⁿ famine is in many places, yet God passeth y^m Over & Sends to y^e poor widowed Soul, y^t is Shut up under its Sins and Corruption y^t cant help itself & forgives its Sins freely, be y^y few or many & gives it faith & X^t freely; This did much affect my heart and Encourage me. And in y^e afternoon M^r Rogers on Eph. 5: 32. Shewing how God breaks those ways of Self Salvation, w^{ch} y^e Soul is apt to rest upon, as by shew ing y^e 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^t y^t therein he Spake my very heart, as I had found y^t God had dealt wth me, He did much Encourage Such, Shewing y^m y^t God thereby was doing y^m much good, leading y^m in y^e right way & pull y^m off from all & fitting y^m for X^t y^t So y^y might not lose their Souls, but might be y^e better X^{ns} all y^r Lives: This did Exceeding ly Encourage me y^t God Should be doing me So much good, by y^t w^{ch} I tho^t had tended to my Destruction. After this M^r Norton preaching out of Heb. 8.8.⁴⁵ concerning y^e new cov^t & Shewing y^t it was an act of Gods Lordship & good pleasure & y^t y^e good of y^e Elect it flows from y^e Eternal good pleasure of God, I was much affected therewth al & tho^t it was a truth Concerning me y^t I was a man of Gods good pleasure. Luke: 2. 11 Likewise hearing M^r Ezek^l Rogers on Rev. 2. and he Speak ing to y^m y^t never had Any first Love, to Consider how y^t wⁿ y^y were Sinning & Rebelling Against God, yet God was Labouring to Save y^r 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. M^r Rogers Again preaching from. Eph: 5.32. concerning Gods work of perswasion of the Soul to come to X^t, by declaring both y^e Sufficiency of X^t & Gods willingness to give X^t to y^e Soul, he answered many objections w^{ch} a Soul might make, many or most of w^{ch} being y^e objections of my heart, w^{ch} 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 y^e dreadful dan ger of Continuing in Unbelief, I knew not w^t to do, I could not believe; many reasonings I had yet had in my heart, about Gods willingness to receive me, thô I was Convinced of his suf ficiency; About that time, being at work abroad in y^e field, there Appeared a Storm Arising, w^{ch} made me to hasten homeward, wth many Serious tho^{ts} occasioned thereby Concerning my Condition, Considering w^t need I had to hasten to get into X^t to be Saved from y^e Storms of Gods wrath

But y^e Storm Seeming to go Over again I Slackt my pace, but before I got home, y^e Shower came up & I was taken in y^e rain, not far off from home, w^{ch} did very much affect my heart; I tho^t y^t God therein did very livelily Shew me my condition, y^t thô I were bro^t near to X^t, yet if now I rested wth out being gotten into X^t I was Undone. That Text in, Num. 35. 26, 27. often pressed by M^r Norton to Such purpose, came affectingly into my mind, y^t if y^e Slayer were at any time found, but wth out y^e gates of y^e City of refuge, y^e avenger of blood might Slay him & be guiltless, So I tho^t y^t how near Soever I might be to X^t, yet if not gotten into X^t, y^e Storms of Gods wrath would Overtake me; And Such like tho^{ts} my heart was taken up wth al, And Considering y^e freeness of Gods grace in offering of X^t to Such a Sinner as I & perswading me to believe, my heart was much taken up wth wondring and admir ing at y^e grace of God & was much taken up wth those words of X^t Mat. 11.20. *Even So father for So it pleased thee*, I Saw y^r could no Other reason be given but Only y^e meer good pleasure of God, But then there came into my mind Somthing of a Sermon of M^r Cottons,⁴⁶ w^{ch} I had Seen, out of Acts. 8. // [Ms. p. 6] concerning Simon Magas wondering at those things, w^{ch} Philip Spake & did & yet proved unsound & likewise y^t in Acts. 13.41. *Behold ye Despisers and wonder and perish* &c: I saw it was not Enough for me to Admire & wonder at y^e grace of X^t, but unless I did believe in him, I Should be found to be a Despiser & Should perish, w^{ch} did much affect my heart; And Considering y^t it was unbelief y^t Shut y^e children of Israel out of Canaan, I Saw y^t it was not my Other Sins but my Unbelief y^t would Shut me out of heaven; I Saw y^t my Everlasting State depended upon it & Considering Gods command y^t I Should believe & my great Sin in not believing, I was in a great Strait, Seeing y^t if in this I did miscarry I was Undone for Ever. I tho^t y^t I of all Other had need to take heed y^t I missed not of X^t, my Sins being So many & great, y^t if y^y were not taken away by X^t, my Condition of all others would be most

⁴⁶William appears to have a published text, or copied notes, of a John Cotton sermon on Acts 8.

miserable; Then y^r was much reasoning in my heart about believing, I tho^t I knew not w^t it was I Should believe; To believe y^t my Sins were pardoned, y^t 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 M^r Norton upon. Rom. 10.4.⁴⁷ 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, y^t y^e Soul was to believe in X^t, w^{ch} yet he Shewed was in Scripture Expressed by diverse meta phors, 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 y^e books of faith, w^{ch} I could get, yet I could not be Satisfied. I knew not how to Come to X^t & Commit my Self to X^t Then y^e L^d was pleased to help me to consi der y^t place. Eph. 2.8. y^t *Faith was y^e gift of God & y^t God was y^e Author & finisher of y^e faith of his people & y^t none could Come to X^t Except y^e father draw him and y^t God had in y^e Cov^t of grace undertaken to work faith & it was only God y^t could work it; I was Encouraged to beg Earnestly of God y^t he would be pleased to work his faith in my heart. It pleased God to bring to my mind often & affectionately y^t Text. Isa: 42.16. *I will bring y^e blind by a way w^{ch} y^y know not, I will lead y^m in paths y^t y^y have not known, I will make darkness Light before y^m and crooked things Straight there things will I do unto y^m & not forsake y^m*. It did much Encourage me to look up to God & plead his promises for y^e 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*,⁴⁸ wherein y^r were many objections Answered w^{ch} were y^e Objections & fears of my heart & many Encouragm^{ts} for Such Souls, w^{ch} was a great help unto me, I was so far bro^t as to assent to y^e truth of Gods promise & Gods faithfulness therein & in respect of my particular, y^t if I did believe I Should be Saved, Ear nestly Desiring of God to work faith; I tho^t y^t I was in y^e Case of that man. Mark. 9. 24. in y^t part of his Speech Crying, *Lord help my unbelief*; but durst not profess before y^e Lord y^t I did believe; I Saw y^t it was not Enough for me to Say in words, I do believe, unless I did wth my heart believe & receive X^t I Should but ly unto God in so*

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 weak in faith* (London, 1630).

professing, I tho^t I did desire to believe & was Excee dingly afraid of Standing it Out Against God by Unbelief & also Exceedingly afraid of a false faith, I durst not but acknowledge to God y^e truth & faithfulness of his promises & his meaning therein to my Soul in particular if // [Ms. p. 7] I did believe, w^{ch} 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, y^t he would be pleased to draw me unto X^t; God was pleased to Carry me on in a way of Searching into y^e promises & such treatises Concerning faith as I had, And reading in M^r Pemble⁴⁹ Concerning y^e Na ture of y^e assent of faith, where he Sheweth y^t to believe a promise is to rely upon y^e performance of it to me whereby I was Something more Enlightened Concerning y^e Nature of faith & bro^t to some dependence upon X^t; yet after this I found my Corruptions Exceeding Strong & prevailing over me wth more pow er than Ever, So y^t I was Sadly discouraged.; I tho^t much upon those words. Jer. 2. 37. *The Lord hath rejected thy confidences*, I tho^t y^t 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 y^e woman of Canaan [Matt. 15:21–28] did Encourage me, Though I Saw y^t I was but a Dog, unworthy of y^e last Crumb of mercy, deserving nothing but hell, y^e L^d was pleased to help me to Acknowledge it before him if So ly at his pleasure, yet Earnestly pleading y^t he would be pleased to glorify y^e Infinite riches of his mercy in Shewing mer cy upon me. About this time I was much follow ed wth Atheistical tho^{ts}, ready to question whither y^r were a God & whither y^e Scriptures were y^e word of God or no, but by Considering of y^e works of God, & reading in Mr Pemble how y^e Scriptures do manifest y^m s^s to be y^e word of God, as y^e Light manifests itself & all Other things, I was Something helped against y^m; About this time being up alone in an Evening & reading in M^r Pemble Concerning y^e particular Act of Justifying Faith y^t it is y^e Adhrance, reliance, Dependence, affiance &c: of y^e Soul upon X^t, That whereby (the Soul being convinced of its Sin & misery & helpless Condition and X^t Je sus proposed & offered to y^e Soul &c:) y^e Soul runs unto X^t to Save it from perishing, y^t y^e Soul clings to & clasps about X^t wth adhrance, relyance, &c: the L^d was pleased So to Overpower my heart & bring me into Such a frame as I am not able to Express, Com-mitting and resigning my Soul up unto X^t, Earnestly desiring the Lord to

⁴⁹Possibly William Pemble (1592²–1623) and, if so, likely his text *Vindiciae fidei, or A treatise of justification by faith* (Oxford, 1625). John Cotton mentions Pemble's *Vindiciae gratiae, A plea for grace . . .* (London, 1627) in his *The Way of Congregational Churches Cleared* (London, 1648), p. 49.

bring me off from all Lusts & Sins & Self & to take full & Everlasting possession of my heart, y^t I might never any more depart from him to Any Sinful way; After this my heart was Somthing Stayed, The L^d was pleasd much to Encourage me by y^t in. Jer. 31. 3. *Yea I have Loved thee with an Everlast ing 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^t & y^t 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; wⁿ I declared my condi tion to y^e Elders,⁵⁰ y^y Seemed to Encourage me, thô y^y Said little to me then, M^r Rogers bidding me y^t I Should hold on was Some Encouragm^t to me. The next Sabbath day M^r Norton⁵¹ preaching out of Rom: 10. 17.⁵² *Faith Cometh by hearing* & Shewing how God by his word doth bring the Soul to faith in X^t, After y^e work of y^e Law, bringing y^e Soul into a dead & helpless condition, then the gospel reveals X^t Jesus & y^t he & he only can Save y^e lost Sinner, That nothing but y^e blood of X^t Can Save y^e lest Sinner and y^t blood can Save y^e greatest, that X^t Saves us not for any thing in us // [Ms. p. 8] but wth out money. Isa: 55.1. That X^t will Save for noth ing. 1 Tim. 1: 14, 15. y^t y^e Spirit of God opens these things to y^e Soul, propounding argum^{ts}, perswading, urging the Soul to believe, & inwardly Accompanyes y^e word, working y^t it perswades, unto giv ing these Evangelical affections & causing y^e Soul to come at y^e call of X^t, wh^{ch} follows union, all eternal relation between X^t & y^e Soul, I found y^t God had thus gone along wth 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^t & drawing my Soul unto X^t whereupon my heart was filled wth much peace & Sweet comfort, much Adoring & admiring at y^t 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 wth much peace & Sweet comfort, . . .”).

Serv^{ts} in Scripture, as. Psa: 116. I saw y^t I had great cause to Come before God wth y^t Acknowledgem^t. Deut. 26. 5. *A Syrian ready to perish was my father &c: & to Say as in. Ezek 16. I was an Amorite, an Hittite, cast out in my blood, & then God Said unto me, Live And to Say wth Sarah. Gen. 21.7. Who would have Said, y^t Ever any grace Should have been wro^t in my barren dead heart Often Saying as Paul. 1. Tim. 1: 17. now unto the King Eternal, Immortal, the only wise God, be honour & glory for Ever and Ever. Amen & y^t in Rev. 1. 5,6. Un to him y^t 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 & Dominion for Ever & Ever, Amen. And often calling upon my Soul wth y^e words of David. Psa: 103. *Bless ye L^d O my Soul, & all y^t is wth in me bless his holy Name &c: & y^t of David. 2. Sam: 7: 18,19,20,21. I Saw y^t only out of Gods own Heart proceeded all y^e great things & considering y^e freeness & peculiarity of Gods Election of So Small a Number Comparatively wth the rest of y^e world, I was Even Confounded to think y^t I Should not be left Among y^e Vast multitude of those y^t perish in their Sins, often think ing of y^t in Psa: 65. 4. *Blessed is y^e man w^m thou chusest & causest to Approach Unto thee y^t he may dwell in thy courts***

I tho^t y^t this So Undeserved mercy shewed to them Such desperate misery, Should for Ever affect my heart & y^t I Should even for Ever be declaring to Angels & Saints, w^t G⁵³ had done for my Soul. But I Soon find a Declining in y^e 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 y^t he who had begun his good work, would also Carry it on. After this I was received into the Church,⁵⁴ Some presence of X^t I found in his Ordinances, but not Such as I Expected & desired, My heart much Cooling, old Corruptions returning Again upon me, w^{ch} I had hoped, I Should no more be troubled wth, yet I was much held under by y^m

⁵³From 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.

⁵⁴William 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. Dittmore 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 wth out Some Conflict yet I did not So kindly re cover out of my falls as I Should have done, w^{ncc} I was much discouraged, yet Somtimes Encouraged by y^e word of God.

Afterward being desired to Undertake y^e Calling y^t now I am Employed in,⁵⁵ I was very fearful in respect of So many temptations accompanying it, w^{ch} I feared would Even overthrow me utterly, I finding So much prevailing of corruption wth in me & So hard to keep my heart in any frame Yet G^s providence Seeming So to call, I was Counsell'd & Encouraged to it, But y^e thing w^{ch} I feared did in great measure Come upon me, my heart grew into a very dead & cold frame; After my marriage I found Some little reviving God having given me So gracious an help; But being So much Oppressed wth Overmuch Labour & incumbrances in my calling, I fell into Such a dead & drowsy frame, as y^t I was fit for no Duty or Service & found little of Gods presence in the Ordinances. M^r Rogers preaching Out of 1. Sam. // [Ms. p. 9] 15. Concerning Saul his hypocrisy, I had many checks of conscience, fearing y^t I had dealt falsely wth God & y^t God had rejected me. That w^{ch} more troubled me was y^t I had not laid Open my heart to Any, nor Confessed those Sins w^{ch} I had been most addicted to & held under y^e power of, w^{ch} made me to fear y^t it was from Some guile & falshood in my heart. About this time y^r being a publick fast appointed to be kept, M^r Rogers y^e Sabbath before it Stirring up people to preparation to y^e duty, among other things advised, y^t if y^r were Any thing between God & Our Souls we would Labour to remove it y^t God might meet us in mercy y^t Day, I then resolved y^t I would go & Open my heart to M^r Rogers,⁵⁶ y^t if it were possible I might be recovered out of my decayed Condition & accordingly I did lay open my heart to M^r Rogers; He told me y^t confession of Sin to man was not always necessary, yet wⁿ God did give Any an heart So to do, it was not wth out Some fruit. Ps: 32. wishing me y^e more to prize y^e blood of X^t w^{ch} cleanseth those deepest Stains of our Souls; He did Encourage me & told me y^t it was a good Argum^t of y^e Sincerity of my heart y^t I was Careful to remove w^t might hinder y^e presence of God from my Soul, This was Some encouragem^t to me, And on y^t 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

⁵⁵Meredith 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.”

⁵⁶See Elisabeth, ms. p. 15, below: “Soon after I went to Mr Rogers & made my Condition known to him.”

for y^e most part; It pleased God Somthing to Awaken me by y^e preaching of M^r Hubbard⁵⁷ upon. Mat. 25. concerning y^e Sudden coming of X^t upon Sleepy & Secure professors, he also Shewing w^r in y^e principal Differ ence between a believer & an Unsound heart lay, y^t it was in y^e Inward bent & inclination of y^e will, it did much Encou rage me, I tho^t I found y^e 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 M^r Rogers's preaching on John. 15. 2. he laying down Some notes of tryal, whither we were true branches of X^t, from y^e Substance of our fruit, y^t our Endeavour be to live according to y^e gospel & y^e heart Subject to y^e gospel & though we fall infinitely Short y^t yet our hearts Stand bent to y^e will of God. 2] From y^e manner of our fruit, y^t it Come from an Inward principle, y^t y^r be a flux of y^e Sap wth in, of y^e Inward grace of y^e Soul, y^t Our Actions be not only Comman ded, but Come from y^e Inward Desires & breakings of y^e Soul Isa: 26. He Shewed y^t these Desires were y^e best notes of Sincerity & Gods pleasant fruits. 3] From y^e Suitableness of our fruit wth y^e Seed, Our Actions framed according to y^e Spirit of the work &c: In y^e laying down of these Signs I found my heart, in Some measure to go along wth y^m w^{ch} was Some Encouragm^t Unto me, Yet finding my Corrupt passions to prevail over me, I was often much Discouraged; Not long after y^r being a Sacram^t Appointed I was much troubled (having formerly not So found God in y^t Ordinance as I might have Expected) lest Still it Should be So & y^t I Should provoke Gods displeasure more Against me, I then went to M^r Rogers & told him how it was wth me & how I was held under my old Corruptions & w^t was almost all y^e Encourag m^t y^t I had Left, namely y^t w^{ch} y^e Church Speaks in Isa: 26. 8. *The Desire of our Soul is to thy Name* &c: I tho^t I felt those inward desires after God; He did Encourage me & bid me make much of y^t Testimony, for y^t was y^e most blessed Sign of Sincerity; my heart was thereby much Eased & I found Somthing more of Gods presence in y^t Sacram^t than formerly. After this M^r Rogers preaching out of Eph: 1.13. Concerning y^e Sealing of y^e Spirit & coming to encourage y^e 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 y^e grace of God upon y^e Soul, w^{ch} are given to be a Seal & testimony, w^{ch} Stand firm, thô y^r may be decays in the Sense & power of it & y^t we Should // [Ms. p. 10] so⁵⁸ hold it & not Suspend our faith upon y^e Sense of those testimonies, He farther directed us to Look— 1] To y^e manner of our Sealing. That it is after believing much work done before to melt & mould y^e Soul & fit it for X^t. 2] The marks of the Seal, An Agreem^t wth y^e word of God, y^e heart turned to y^e will of God, wth con Sent, Submission, & conformity, thô wth Difficulty of performance, This Stamp beats out y^e old Stamp, thô not perfectly & at once, yet y^t y^e heart is under y^e Subduing work of y^e Spirit, & thô he may be Overcome, yet it is y^t w^{ch} we would not, but would Out wth all, And y^t y^r is a bent of hearts and inclination Godward; He Shewed y^t those Impressions of God upon y^e Soul are Seals & pledges y^t we are Gods own, Thô never So Small yet y^y were tokens between God & us & therefore we Should not lose y^e comfort of y^m My heart was much affected in the hearing of these things, God was pleased in Some measure to Clear up my Condition by y^m, I found my heart in Some Comfortable measure to go along wth these testimonies, w^{ch} was Some Encouragm^t to me y^t God had given me Some Earnest of y^t heavenly Inheritance w^{ch} 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, consciencious & 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^t 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, y^t I Should have So provoked God, to Come wth So heavy a Stroke upon me, I Saw y^t I had great need of an Awakening out of my Security, thô I could thrô Gods grace in Some measure Say y^t I was not altogether at Ease & Quiet, in my prosperous Condition, wⁿ God So Shined upon me, but was often thinking y^t I must Expect Changes, w^{ch} way I knew not, yet very hard I found it to keep my heart from running out in pursuit of y^e world in y^e 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 & y^t now I must look to See no more comfortable days in this world; I

⁵⁸The 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 dispensatiō of God & Even ready to wish for Death; But God was pleased to help me to Consider, y^t it was y^e good pleas ure of God So to deal wth me, And y^t as to y^t mercy w^{ch} God had Shewed to my Soul, y^r could be no other reason given of it, but only his meer good pleasure; And if it were y^e Same good pleasure of God to afflict me, why Should it not be Acceptable to me, & y^t it was Gods Infi nite mercy if at y^e last he did Save me from hell, w^t ever he Should Suffer me to meet wth al in this world; I was much followed wth Atheistical Temptations, Even ready to question whither y^r were any Such happy Condition of Gods people or no, thō thrō Gods goodness y^y did not very far prevail; But I was much troubled about my particular Condition, much fear ing that this Sad hand of God was but a forerunner of my de clining & falling off, I having found So much deadness & decaying while God did afford me So gracious an help, of So godly a yoke fellow, w^{ch} now being taken away I was in much more danger // [Ms. p. 11] of declining & falling off, I went to M^r Rogers & told Him w^t were y^e fears of my heart, desiring to open all my heart to him, thō at y^t time I had not Opportunity, yet then he told me y^t I Ought not to give way to Such ungrounded fears, but if y^r were any thing grounded on Gods word, w^{ch} were cause of fear, y^t I Should out wth y^t; I told him y^t w^t Comfort I had received it was by y^e word of God, I tho^t y^t in Some measure of truth I might Say, y^t if I were deceived it had been by y^e word of God; M^r Rogers told me y^t it was good for me to hold there & wished me Ever to keep to that;

The Next morning in my waking & trembling tho^{ts} y^e L^d was pleased affectingly to bring to my mind y^t Text. 1. Pet. 1. 5. *who are kept by y^e power of God thrō faith unto Salvation.* w^{ch} was much encouragm^t to me, I Saw y^t 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^r Rogers in his prayer before Sermon, had very many Expressions So Suitable to my Condition, as y^t I tho^t he had Special reference for me therein, begging of God to undertake for his Serv^{ts}, who were Sensible of y^r own weakness, faintings, &c: my heart was much affected wth it & Enc ouraged thereby, And in y^e Sermon, on Eph. 1. 18. *y^t the Eyes of your Understanding being Enlightened* &c: he Shewing y^t y^e Spirit of revelation was Necessary, not only y^t we might be able to know, but Actually to Conceive & Understand y^e things of grace, And in his use of y^e point he Shewed y^t it was a Singu lar Evidence of Gods favour to those w^m he had made to See these great things, y^t he had made to See his Everlasting Love; to See X^t Jesus; His meaning in y^e promise to See y^e actings of thy Faith, to See y^e Everlasting Inheritance, Gods

meaning in his Chastisem^{ts}; That God Secretly Expounds these things to y^e Soul, w^{ch} are but as parables to y^e most hear ers, But if God had given any these manifestations, it was an Effect of y^e Spirit of revelation & a token of Blessedness; They were made of Gods privy Counsel. Mat. 13. 16. I was much Enc ouraged hereby, I found Gods Spirit much breathing in my heart in y^e hearing of it & helping me to See y^t God had been pleased by his Spirit, often in hearing of y^e word & in Other Ordinances, to open these things in Some measure to my Soul; About this time my heart being full of trouble & disquieting tho^{ts}, in res pect of y^e Loss of my wife & care Concerning my children,⁵⁹ it pleased God one morning in my waking tho^{ts}, to encourage me by Suggesting to my mind, in way of allusion y^t Speech of the old man at Gibeah unto y^e Levite. Judg. 19. 20. *Let all thy wants be upon me, Only abide not in thy unbelief & distrust w^{ch} took Some Impression upon me;* The next week y^r being a fast kept at Rowley, I was desirous to Enjoy y^t Opportunity of humbling my Soul before God, being under his humbling provi dence, Being there I found my heart much affected wth M^r. Ro gers's prayer, Esp: Some passages to this purpose, y^t God was forced out of very faithfulness to his Serv^{ts}, to Come wth Sharp tryals, to cure y^r corruptions, y^t y^e might not grow to Such Ulcers as Should be Incurable, I tho^t it was y^e 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 y^t had found much Comfort from y^t Text, upon a Special occasion, it falling in y^e Course of his meditation, w^{ch} duty of meditation I had been much wanting in, thô often Endeavouring to Set upon it, it plea sed God upon y^e hearing of that Example to Suggest to my mind y^t it would be a great help to me in y^t duty to observe an order & course therein. Soon after I had farther Speech wth M^r Rogers & opening my heart unto him, I was more Encouraged (as also I had been by reading M^r Shepherd's Sound Believer)⁶⁰ and telling M^r Rogers how I had been wanting in meditation & daily walking wth God, & w^t 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."

⁶⁰*The sound beleever, or, a treatise of evangelicall 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 y^t w^t Sermons I heard I Should thorowly think of y^m, & go along in Some principles of // [Ms. p. 12] religion, w^{ch} Course I Endeavoured to Set upon & found much help in it, after a weeks practice in this Course; The next Sabbath in y^e morning having been reading in M^r Shepherd's Sound Believer & repeating a Sermon of M^r Philips,⁶¹ out of Col. 1.21. it pleased y^e L^d very graciously to breath upon my heart thereby clearing up y^e truth of y^e work of his grace upon my Soul & much breaking of my heart wth all, to think y^t G should bring Such an one as I into a State of reconciliation wth 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^t to me to Endeavour to walk wth G.

In w^{ch} way I might Expect y^e presence of G and y^e 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 wth any constancy in y^t way, thô G was pleased in Some measure to help me & keep my heart towards him wth 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 y^t had been of good Acco^t, y^t it was feared was fallen, it Struck my heart wth an Exceeding great fear Concerning my Self, thinking y^t it was almost Impossible y^t 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 y^t in, Isa. 42: 21. *The L^d is well pleased for his righteousness Sake* &c: y^t G was well pleased wth me for the Sake of X^t Jesus & would not leave me. Another morning in my Sleep, tho^{ts} Came into my mind of a Young man, of w^m it was Said y^t he had left a maid w^m he was in love wth, it pleased God affectingly to Suggest to my mind (I wa king therewth) y^t G would not So deal wth me, Sweetly bringing to my mind y^t in Jer. 3. 1, 12. *Thô 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 Im ployed in my calling & was thinking upon a Sermon preached by M^r Hubbard upon. Rev. 2. 7. *To him y^t Overcometh will I give to eat of y^e tree of Life* &c: w^{ch} Eating he Shewed did note an Immediate fruition of

⁶¹Samuel 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.

X^t in heaven, my heart was much taken up wth y^e happy Condition of my wife, who was gotten Safe thrô this evill world & Enjoying y^e Immediate fruition of God and X^t, it pleased G much to Encourage me y^t it would not be long but I also Should enjoy y^e Same, w^{ch} did ravish my heart to think of those Ineffable Joys & pleasures at Gods right hand & y^t blessed Communion of my Soul wth X^t my head; And coming home at Noon I was looking into M^r Bolton's⁶² Directi ons for a X^{ns} walking wth God & Lighting upon a place w^r he ad viseth a Christian often to be Looking into y^e glory of Heaven by meditation upon y^t Everlasting Bliss, to think of y^t Everlasting Communion wth X^t, y^e Angels & glorified Saints & y^e Beatifick Vision of God himself, Once in a day at lest, thus to cast up y^e Eye of his faith upon y^t never fading Crown of Life, w^{ch} wth in an inch of time Should Eternally rest upon his head, y^t it would be a no table help to keep y^e heart heavenward & wth delight to walk wth G, This did much affect my heart, it So Concurring wth w^t I had been thinking of beforehand & God having given me a tast of y^e 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 Spiri tual pride, wⁿ G Enlarged me, I found my Self So Exceeding apt to have Overweening tho^{ts} of my self and w^t G had done for me yet it pleased G to help me to be Striving against these tho^{ts} thô I was Exceedingly followed wth y^m; Then it pleased G to let loose Again upon me Some Strong Corruption, w^{ch} for merly I had been most overtaken wth, w^r by I Saw more into y^e Vileness of my Corrupt Nature & had Cause to loath my Self for y^e 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 X^t Jesus, wth out whose help & grace, I Saw I was undone for Ever. // [Ms. p. 13]

ELISABETH ADAMS (FORMERLY STACEY)

DECEASED APR. 2^D 1655, AGED 31.

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

⁶²Perhaps Robert Bolton (1572?-1631), *Some generall directions for a comfortable walking with God* (London, 1625).

great Sins & Live Civilly, I Should go to hea ven, thô I had not So much Knowledge & yⁿ I Should not need to Labour for more knowledge; But Soon after it pleas ed God to let me fall into Some Sins w^{ch} I tho^t were very great & then I was afraid y^t I Should go to hell; Then I Set upon reading, to See if I could find, whither Ever God pardo ned Such Sins or no; And reading y^e Book of Francis Spira,⁶³ They who came to him, told him w^t great Sins y^e pro phet David Committed & others in Scripture Committed great Sins & yet God pardoned y^r Sins. But he answered y^t y^y were y^e *Elect*, but God would never have mercy on him.

There I understood y^t none but y^e *Elect* were Saved; I tho^t y^t I was none of y^e *Elect*, for then I tho^t y^t God would never have Suffered me So to Sin, I tho^t y^t in all y^t Ever I did, I Sinned Against God; If I were at y^e performance of Dutyes or went to hear y^e word, I tho^t y^t I heaped up wrath Against y^e day of wrath; I felt Such horror of conscience⁶⁴ y^t I could not Endure to be alone, for I Concluded y^t I Should go to hell; But there came to my mind y^t place Rom. 9.18. *that God hath mercy on whom he will have mer cy & w^m he will he hardeneth.* I tho^t y^t *hardening* was wⁿ a Soul was in its natural Condition & was not Sensible of it, but I tho^t y^t I was Sensible of my Condition, w^{ch} was Some Encouragm^t to me; A while after M^r Norton Shew ed y^t it was as Easie wth y^e Lord Jesus, to pardon a great Sinner as y^e least & therefore y^e greatness of Sins Should not discourage Any; And other Encouragm^{ts} I had by y^e word & Somtimes convictions; A while after my Father fell Sick & M^r Rogers Coming to see him, he told me y^t we had need to pray to God to Spare his Life, for it might be for our Sins y^t God might take him Away, I did not at y^e present much mind his words, but after my father was dead⁶⁵ I was much Troubled about y^m, because y^y were Spo ken to me, as if it were for my Sins Only, However I tho^t

⁶³Possibly *Relation of the fearfull 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.

⁶⁴Compare to William's lack of "terror," ms. p. 3, above.

⁶⁵Hammatt 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" (*Daves-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 y^e greatest Share in it; Then I was trou bled how to know w^t Sin it Should be. And y^e next Sabbath M^r Norton had a proof in Isa: 51. 14. The Captive Exile hasteneth y^t *he may be loosed* &c: & Another in. Hos. 13. 13. *Ephraim is an unwise son* &c: I tho^t y^t I was not like y^e Captive Exile, but like Ephraim lazy and Slothful.

I tho^t it was for y^t Sin & then I tho^t y^t I would not give way to my Slothfulness, but pray more & Set upon Some reformation; But after y^t I tho^t y^t I had Such an hard heart: About y^t time M^r Norton having a proof out of Ezek. 36. [26] *I will take Away y^e heart of Stone & give an heart of flesh & put my Spirit wth in you & write my law in your hearts & I will be your God & ye Shall be my people.* I tho^t I might receive this promise y^t God would be my God & I Should be his; I tho^t y^t then my con dition was good; A while after I went to live wth M^r Rogers of Rowley⁶⁶ & my master was very Earnest to know how it was wth me, At length I told him Somthing; He told me that he would not Discourage me, he hop // [Ms. p. 14] ed y^t there might be Some work of God in me, But afterward he told me, y^t I tho^t because I had been wounded for Sin, y^t presently y^e 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^t if I Continued Constant in Seeking X^t daily, it may be I might find him, but Otherwise I might happen to go wth 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^e godly Life; And hearing M^r Rogers at Ipswich on y^e Lecture days, concerning y^e X^{ns} daily walk, I tho^t I could not so much as keep my heart with God in Dutyes & therefore much less all y^e day long; And Considering y^t my master being a mes senger of God, knew better than I did w^t my Condition was, it did So Discourage me y^t I was ready to give Over all; But y^t place of Scripture came to my mind y^t *those w^{ch} Seek shall find*, [Matt. 7:8] it was Some Encouragm^t to me to use the means & Seek, But I tho^t I found y^t 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^t again it might be to increase my Sin & make me fit for destruction; But I tho^t I would wait in y^e use of means; And because God had promised y^t y^v y^t Seek Shall find and I did Seek & yet did not find, I tho^t 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 y^y were earnest Enough in Seeking y^t God might fulfill y^t promise, He told me y^t he had heard a minister Speak to it thus, y^t if a Soul weighing that wth all other things found y^t to be y^e greatest; it did much Encourage me to wait on God; A while after, it was Shewed in a Sermon y^t y^y who wait for a promise, God will in his time Send one; I tho^t y^t I had not had So much horror of conscience as Some had & therefore was not fit to receive a promise; About y^t time upon Some occasion I came to Ipswich on the Lords Day & hearing M^r Norton on Rom. 10. 4.⁶⁷ the last words of it, he Shew ed y^t it was y^e Duty of Every one to believe in X^t & answering an objection y^t a Soul might make, y^t y^y found y^t God had Enlightned y^m & Convinced y^m of their Sins, but y^y found not So much horror of Conscience as Some do, & therefore were afraid to believe, he Answered y^t true Humiliation did not Consist in Horrour of Conscience, for y^e Devills were terrified Enough & yet y^y could not be lieve, & y^t God did dispense the measure of Humiliati on Diversely, as he pleased, This was Some Encouragm^t unto me; Afterwards in hearing y^e word of God w^r in warning was given to Souls to take heed of receiving comfort too Soon, I tho^t I was willing to wait Gods time if God would but at last Come in: But after this I grew into a Slight & Neglig^t frame, as thô I did not regard w^t became of me; A while after one last day of y^e week at night, my master Shew ed y^t y^y were in an ill Condition, who had gotten nothing all y^e week & I tho^t y^t I had not only not gained, but lost, This much troubled me & I tho^t y^t it was a Sign y^t I was a reprobate, because I profited not under So much means but rather grew worse, I tho^t it were better for me to give Over using means, because it is Said y^t y^e prayer of y^e wicked is Abomination, I knew not how to bear y^e Con dition 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 Encouragm^t to me to use y^e means M^r Miller⁶⁸ Shewed, y^t wⁿ a Soul is bro^t to be Low & vile in its own eyes, it is a fit object for G to work upon; I tho^t y^t if G had made [men]⁶⁹ fit for himself to work upon, he would also work his work in me

M^r N. Rogers preaching at Rowley, Shewed y^t a Soul must be divorced from its first Husband all Sin & Lust, before it will close wth X^t, and y^t

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.

y^e great reason why So many came Short, was because y^y could not bear y^e Cutting off: I tho^t I was not thorowly divorc ed from all, but Some Lust was yet remaining; I knew not whi ther it were in my power to divorce my Self; The next day I asked a godly man, he told me y^t a great matter lay in y^e will; I tho^t I was willing: A while after I returned home to my mother,⁷⁰ at y^t time y^r was Some fear of Indians, I tho^t if war should come,⁷¹ I was in a Sad condition, for I had not gotten any thing w^{ch} I could trust to in a point of Salvation, but if I Should then die, I Should go to Hell; I tho^t 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^t I tho^t it was Impossible, I Should Ever attain to y^e pardon of my Sins & peace of Conscience; Soon after M^r Rogers in his Sermon, had a use of Encouragm^t to such as were Shut up in Sin & knew not how to get Out, he Shewed y^t y^e L^d J. was a mediator to go between G & man, to purchase pardon & deliverance at G^s hand, This did Encourage me much y^t G had Shewed me a way to get out; But he Shewing how y^e Soul must be divorced from all Sin, before it could Close wth X^t, I tho^t y^r was one Lust w^{ch} I Should never get rid of; I was then Even ready to Despair; Soon after I went to M^r Rogers & made my Condition known to him;⁷² He told me y^t was One Step to heaven & bid me y^t I Should not Shake off y^e yoke but humble my Self under G^s hand & he would lift me up in due time & bid me not to be discouraged; Reading y^t place in Mat. y^t *The Kingdom of Heaven Suffereth Violence & y^e violent take it by force*, [Matt. 11:12] I was much troubled y^t I was no more Earnest and Constant in Seeking as I Should be. After this M^r

⁷⁰F. M. Caulkins, "Memoir," p. 9, notes that the Rev. William Adams reports in his memoir "Anno 1669 Oct. 14: 'I heard of the death of my grandmother Starr [Stacy], who died Oct. 9.'" According to the *New England Historical and Genealogical Register* 58 (1904): 91, "The name Stacy, written in the seventeenth century hand and spelled (as was frequently the case) *Stace* or *Stacie*, may easily be misread Starr, even by an excellent antiquary."

⁷¹There are a few events in the extant records that might speak to this fear of war with the Indians. See Winthrop, *History*, 2:134ff. on Uncas capturing the Narragansett Miantunmoh and the Court's decision to put him to death. Winthrop notes in August 1643, "It was now clearly discovered to us, that there was a general conspiracy among the Indians to cut off all the English, and Miantunmoh was the head and contriver of it." In 1645, Winthrop reports that the "Narragansetts having begun war upon Uncas, the Monheagan sachem" (*History*, 2:254). There were tensions between these tribes again in 1648 (*History*, 2:349). Hammatt, *Early Inhabitants of Ipswich*, records a 9 December 1648 town meeting for "Subscribers of Ipswich" to pay Maj. Denison for his military services, p. 9.

⁷²Compare William above, ms. p. 9, "I did lay open my heart to M^r Rogers."

Rogers out of Eph. 5. 32.⁷³ had an use of Encouragm^t to poor Souls y^t would fain come to X^t but could not, That God could perswade y^e heart & remove the op position of the will & Exhorted Such to Seek to G to do it & yⁿ 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^t my Condition was worse than Ever & y^t now G had left me. The next Sabbath M^r Norton preaching out of Rom. 10. 14. *How Shall y^y preach except they be Sent* he quoted Luke. 4. [25–26]⁷⁴ *Many widows were in Is rael, but to none of y^m was Elias Sent, Save to y^e widow of Sarep ta*, He Shewed y^t God Sends y^e ministry to y^e Lost & widowed Soul y^t is far off & unable to get out of its Sins & Corruptions, y^t God would give y^m faith & X^t freely & God freely offered X^t to Such Soul & therefore wo would be to y^m if y^y rejected it. This was Some Encouragm^t to me, and in y^e afternoon, M^r Rogers on. Eph. 5 32. Shewing how G breaks all false Contracts & ways of Self Salva tion w^{ch} y^e Soul is apt to take, I found y^t G had So dealt wth me,

In y^e Latter End of his Sermon he came to an use of encouragm^t [to]⁷⁵ Such Souls y^t G had So dealt wth al, It was because God would not have y^m lose y^r Souls, but would bring y^m off from all to X^t, This was great Encouragm^t to me; But a little after M^r Norton Shew ed y^t Such a Soul as G had not Spoken peace unto, all y^t y^y did was Accursed; And hearing my master Rogers, y^t Such a Soul as was [not]⁷⁶ reconciled to God, all y^e Judgm^{ts} pronounced in y^e Book of God did hang over y^r heads. These things did much discourage me y^t I tho^t I Should never get to heaven, I Saw So many discouragm^{ts} in the way, And I found y^t I had Such a vile heart, w^{ch} I tho^t it was Impossible y^t Ever it Should be Changed; And finding my heart [so]⁷⁷ bad, I tho^t y^t w^t Came from me must needs be So too, y^t I was tempted to give over Seeking to God, but I tho^t y^t 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^y being a fast⁷⁸ to be kept I was afraid it might be to my hardning, I being So vile; Then I went to M^r Rogers & told him how it was wth me; He told me y^t may be I was not So Vile in Gods Eyes & y^t 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 Encouragem^t to me; And y^t fast Day God did discover to me, that those who Seek in truth Shall find, I then resolved, w^t ever discouragem^{ts} I met wth al never to give Over, but if I did perish, to per ish in a way of Seeking God; A while after, reading in *y^e Soules preparation for X^t*,⁷⁹ y^t those who are Slight and Overly in confesSing their Sins are but hypocrites, I tho^t I had not been So Free in Confessing my Sins, as I ought to have been & there- // [Ms. p. 16] fore feared y^t I was but an hypocrite; I feared also y^t I was guilty of y^e Sin Against y^e Holy Ghost. I made it known to M^r Rogers, he told me w^t y^t Sin was, where by I Understood y^t I was not guilty of it, But I tho^t y^t I was yet Under y^e curse of God & y^t all his Judgm^{ts} Hung over my head, w^r wth my heart was much affected, Especially one Sabbath day morning, But I tho^t wth my Self (thô I could not Conceive w^{ch} way I Should Ever receive mercy or Comfort) y^t God was able to do more, than I was able to conceive of. That Sabbath M^r Norton preaching out of Rom. 10. 15. He had an use of Encouragm^t to Such as were Sensible y^y were Nothing, He Shewed y^t it was y^e very Condi tion wherein X^t closeth wth his Elect; I tho^t y^t I was in y^t condition So y^t it was much Encouragm^t Unto me; yet afterw ards I Saw more of my Own Heart & miserable Condition by nature y^t I tho^t it was Just wth G to leave me & I did not know but y^t he would; But M^r Norton Shewing out of Rom. 10. 20. w^t a lost Estate was & y^t a Soul in y^t Estate, was in y^e next Disposi tion to be found of X^t, I tho^t I was Lost, It did much Stay my heart, And m^r Rogers preaching out of Isa: 53.1. did much Encourage those Souls, y^t were in Such a Condition (as I found I was in) to believe in X^t it did much Encourage me y^t God did require of me to believe; I tho^t y^t it was not in my power to believe, But faith it was y^e gift of God, And being told y^t God did hear those prayers y^t were made for faith, it did encourage me to beg of G y^t he would work faith in my heart; But afterward I could not So much as pray for faith; Then I tho^t my Condition very bad & that I was an hypocrite; But M^r Rogers Shewing how far an hypocrite might See into Heaven, Yet not So far as to part wth his Lusts, I tho^t I was willing to part wth all & glad if I could be rid of y^m, y^t I might become partaker of X^t Jesus; A while after my master Rogers was Desirous to know of me, how God had gone along wth me, when I told him, He Answered y^t it was a great Degree to prize X^t above all & to be willing to part wth all for him and y^t he did not question but y^t God had given me faith, thô I knew it not, but in Gods time I Should know it;

⁷⁹Thomas Hooker, *The soules preparation for Christ* . . . (London, 1632).

But yet I found So little power Against my Corruptions, y^t I was afraid I deceived my Self & Others; But Mr. Norton⁸⁰ preaching out of Rom. 11. 17. Shewed y^t Such a Soul y^t 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 Gods Invitations, w^{ch} did affect me, y^t Gods Invitations would not prevail, but he was forced to Come wth threatnings; Yet I questioned whither I might believe or not, but Considering y^e faithfulness of God & y^e truth of his word, y^t 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 M^r Rogers Shewing y^t Such Souls as had been bro^t to depend on X^t for Salvation, were in a good es tate, thô y^r faith were not So clear, he quoted y^t place. John. 6. 37. *He y^t cometh to me I will in no wise Cast out*, this did very much cheer my heart & encourage me to Seek after God y^t he would more manifest himself unto me; Afterwards M^r Rogers Shewed y^t Such a Soul as God had drawn to X^t & y^t 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 wth Admiration at Gods mercy Shew ed unto me; And afterward M^r Rogers Shewed out of Eph. 2. 10. y^t where God had begun his good work, he would also perfect it, this did much Encourage me, y^t 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^{ch} also I have found in Some measure to be answered by the word, of God.⁸¹

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."

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