Finally, these next five documents are all conversion narratives from the Seacoast Revival of 1763-1764 in Ipswich. They help place Phillis's narrative in the context of New England evangelical religion. The first two narratives were offered by women who, like Phillis, were a bit older than most converts in the revival. Unlike those in their late teens and early twenties who formed the large majority of those inspired by the Seacoast Revival, Mary Rust, Mary Story, and Phillis all had been attracted to the Great Awakening in the early 1740s; all had subsequently seen their piety wane. Narratives three through five are from converts who quoted some of the same biblical passages that moved Phillis. Susanna Low, Rachel Low, and—Haskell (a man about thirty-one years old by internal evidence) all refered to Matt. 11:28, in which Jesus says: "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (King James Version). Like Phillis (and Flora before her), Susanna Low invoked Isa. 55:1: "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters, and he that hath no money; come ye, buy, and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk without money and without price." More generally, these five narratives are similar in structure and cadence to Phillis's narrative, no doubt partly because Reverend John Cleaveland transcribed all of the documents.


Mary Rust's Relation, August 26, 1764

I was bro't under convictions in the former reformation, and tho't I met with a Change then, and can't say now it was not a real Change, I was under convictions then for many months, and saw myself to be a great Sinner and tho't I was worse than a Beast and was greatly burdened, and one morning when my Father was at prayer, I felt the Burden remove and I felt peace in my mind and a Desire after holiness, and felt a loathing of Sin, this Impression, more or less was on my mind pritty sensibly for two or three years, but after getting into company and afterwards into the cares of the world it gradually wore off; I can't say I was ever then fully satisfied that I had Met with a Saving Change. But in the Time of the Earthquake, Eight or Nine years ago, I was awakened to great concern, and tho't I found some comfort, but had no satisfaction that my State was safe and never had 'till of late, and nothing would have prevailed with me while I was unsatisfied to join to the Church--but I was all along since the Earth-quake concerned about the state of my soul, and last Summer, a Sermon Mr Cleaveland preached from those words, if ye will deal truly and kindly with my Master tell me if not tell me, that I may turn to the right hand or to the left, had a powerful effect upon my mind, and especially when he said the people here in Chebacco had the offer to become the Bride of Christ, and if they refused, he would turn to such as would accept of it: this had a great and lasting impression upon my Mind: and I was bro't out, I concluded I had met with a Saving Change and was in the Gall [?] of better [illeg.] under Bonds of Iniquity, I saw I had done nothing [illeg.] against God, and that my heart was full of Sin and [illeg.] God, and that all that I could do was Sin. I saw that I was condemned by God and he might justly destroy me forever, and that I could do nothing to procure his Favour to me--and I was bro't to surrender to God and found my Burden remove, and was at Times comforted but

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soon should fear that I had received nothing but common illusions of the Spirit--but one Sabbath-morning last March [?] I was greatly concerned to know whether I had received a Change [illeg.] came to me, O Israel thou hast destroyed thy self [illeg.] is thy help, which had a great impression on my [illeg.] when I was up I took the Bible and looked in it thinking to find it there, and as I was reading [I opened] to those words, they shall look on him whom they [illeg.] and shall mourn for him and be in [illeg.] for him as for an only son and a first born; and saw there how I had peirced Christ with my Sins and my heart was made to mourn and bleed for Sin as I had wounded Christ by them--I never had such a mourning of heart for Sin before: it seemed as if I wanted to shrink into nothing, and with this sense I went to Meeting, and Mr Cleaveland reading that letter of Mr Buel in the afternoon, my heart seemed to be raised with Joy and felt comfortable, but after while singing a hymn in which was these words, was the same Love that spread the Feast that sweetly forced us in, else we had still refus'd to taste, and perished in our Sin: I saw that it was the sovereign Love of God and of Jesus Christ that had sweetly forced me in while thousands as good as I was were left to perish, indeed I saw none to be so bad as I saw myself to be: and I was now made entirely to surrender all to God. I had done it divers Times before, but now I gave up all with my whole heart, my Body Soul and all to God, and Mr Cleaveland mentioning now that such as had a mind to offer themselves to be taken in to the Church might have an opportunity that week. I tho't I would embrace it as all my Bars [?] and difficulties were removed, but before the Day came, I lost that sense of Things and dare not come forward--but that Fryday they were taken in I went to the Meeting but had no great sense till the last Relation was read, and then I was moved something and I was filled with earnest desires to God that he would appear for me before I left the house and shew me satisfingly that I had a standing in Christ; and while they were singing a hymn upon the sufferings of Christ, I was filled with a sense of the astonishing dying Love of Christ and of his distinguishing Love to me, from many of my fellow creatures and my heart was broken for Sin: and I loathe it and long to be delivered wholly from it: and I have not been exercised with such difficulties since that Time except the Tuesday after, I was then greatly bowed down having lost the sense of the Love of God upon my soul, but could find no rest till I applied to Christ again, and when I applied I was relieved: I bless God I have an abiding satisfaction that I have met with a Saving Change of heart, my heart is towards God, I desire you to pray for me that I may be holy and live to God's praise and Glory.

Mary Story's Relation

I was bro't under concern first in the Summer before the work broke out powerfully in Ipswich in the Former Reformation, I don't remember now that any actual sin except the Breach of the Sabbath lay heavy upon me in the first of my concern, I seem'd to have a sense that God was Angry with me, and I wanted something to reconcile God to me: my concern was bro't on by a sermon I heard Mr Rogers preach at Mr Thomas Smiths from those words, behold now is the accepted Time behold now is the Day of Salvation: I was bro't to see what a dreadful thing it was not to believe in Christ, and saw that I deserved to be sent to Hell for not believing: after this I heard another Sermon upon those words, How shall we escape if we neglect so great a salvation: which loaded me with a heavy Burden on my Spirit, and I retired by myself in distress, and tho' I had had some view of the Justice of God in my condemnation before, yet I was ready to think Christ was not willing to save me and I must perish, and my heart rise with Enmity against God, and I wished that I had no soul; and could not help crying O that I had no soul: after this hearing a wonderful work there was at Ipswich-Town, I desired to go
there, and did awhile after, and as I was agoing, I was sensible that Christ was willing but I was unwilling, and my soul kept crying to the Lord all the way that he would bow my stubborn will and make me willing to accept of Christ O that this may be the Time of thy Power! and when I heard the Text that was preached upon that Day which was this, It is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation that Jesus Christ came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am Chief: I saw Christ dyed for the Chief of Sinners, and my desires were increased that this might be the Time of God's power and Grace to my soul. But another sermon was preached in the Evening, after which, a great number were speaking to me in Joy and some in Distress, I found my will bow and submit to Christ, and I was willing to give all up to him, and saw a wonderful Beauty and loveliness in Christ and seem'd to wonder all did not Love him, indeed I used to think I loved him before but now I found it was another thing than what I ever felt before, and tho' I should always actually love him he was so lovely, I did not know I had such a heart as I since have found. I came home and went to bed but had such a sense of the wonderful forgiving Love of God towards me that I could not sleep as before. The next Morning I went out a Doors, I felt such a Change in my mind, that it seem'd that every Thing I saw with my Eyes of the works of God praised him, the works of God looked pleasant. And after when I came to Look into the Word of God it appeared a new Book, tho' I don't remember I ever called in Question before, the Truth of it, yet now I saw it to be true and faithful, and it was very precious to my soul; and altho at Times I had clouds of Darkness coming over my Mind, yet for two or Three years, my Delight was in the word worship and ways of God, and was kept from turning after youthful Vanities. But after some Time I began to be more off of my Watch and Guard (I desire young Christians to take warning by me), and God withdrew himself from me, and I ran into company and after vanity, tho' I sho'd have severe checks for it when alone, and formed Resolutions that I would do so no more, but my strength was departed from me that the power of Vanity would prevail, but my [illeg.] was at one Time wounded with a Sense of this that [illeg.] was wounded in the House of his Friend. . . . I desire your Prayers for me that I may walk in the Light of the Lord and to the Praise and Glory of God.

propounded June 17, 1764, and admitted June 29, 1764

Susanna Low's Relation

I saw when I was a Child that there was a heaven and a Hell and was afraid I should go to hell and went about to build a righteousness of my own: and so went on till the Earthquake in 55 when I was shaken much and set about making myself better, but settled on the sandy foundation of my own Righteousness: and thus I continued till this Blessed Day of God's gracious visitation--when I was bro't to see myself upon a false foundation--I saw that I was the chief of Sinners, and was cast off wholly from myself, and surrendered all unto God to his divine dispose; and I saw Christ came to seek and save that which is lost I saw myself to be such a one: that he calls upon the weary and heaven-laden--and on him that is a Thirst to come to him, I said I was such a one--and I have given all up to Christ and he is all in all--and I now give all away to him, and hate and abhor Sin. I have seen my Interest in Christ's dying Love. I desire your prayers for me. I have seen in my Duty to own Christ before men.

Rachel Low's Relation

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I was never under much convictions till the Friday after the Earthquake in 1755. I went to Lecture, and after that was over, went in to see Mr Brown that was drawing nigh his End, seeing him my mind was affected with a consideration that I might be in Eternity before him and that I was not in a prepared estate, as I was going home I had a sense that every step I took I was drawing nearer to Eternity and the tho’ I was unprepared lay heavy on me. And when I got home Mr Caleb Burnam came in and was speaking of Lisbon being shook down by an Earthquake, this struck me into Distress, I saw my sins to be numerous but Sabbath-Breaking and telling lyes for sport lay weight on me. And the Saturday night after there was another Earthquake which shook my mind very much and I was greatly distressed with the sight of my Danger—but it wore off considerably: till about two or Three months after, reading those words, I will laugh at your Calamity and mock when your Fear cometh; which bro’t to my Mind and very much affected my Mind with a sense how I had been grieving and stiffling [my] spirit of conviction and disregarding the warnings and calls of God—about a fortnight after that I was in very great Distress, and bowed down with a sense of my Sin and Guilt, saw my heart was stubborn and full of Enmity against God and divine justice would shine [on] all ye that labour &c, I saw I was weary & heavy laden, which was followed with those, whoseover will let him come; I saw that my will had kept me back but now was willing to come and saw Christ was just a saviour as I needed and that it was safe trusting in him, and found my burden removed, and found love to Christ and loathing of Sin: the next Day a more clear Discovery of my Interest in Christ, as tho’ he dyed for me only: after a while I lost my first Love and to my shame, have not lived to the honor of God as I ought, but since this Revival my soul has been quickened, and my interest . . . [Here it breaks off.]

Haskell’s Relation

Being favoured with a religious Education I began the practice of religion when I was young, and when I was eliven years old I entertained the hope that I was a child of God, but was not capable of giving any particular account of a Change of heart; but sometime after when Mr Cleaveland first came or soon after he was settled I heard him preach a Sermon, I think it was on a Sacrament Day, he shewed how far persons might experience in Religion and yet stop short of a saving Change, and I set myself to Examine myself by what was said, and saw I had reason to conclude I had never experienced a saving Change, which has made me more cautious [illeg.] with what I have met with of late as Saving: [at] that Time I considered myself as an unconverted Sinner, and endeavoured to lay open to Convictions--and I had [illeg.] almost every Sermon I heard more or less, and in the [illeg.] I was made sensible that my feet stood in slippery places and that text, their Feet shall slide in due Time, followed me, but after a while the Impression seem’d to go off, but often-Times what I heard preached to Sinners came with such weights on that I could not stand under it, and when Mr Cleaveland was speaking of his being such to woe o Bride for Christ and asking Sinners what return he sho’d make Christ, whether this, they would not be persuaded? this made my Flesh tremble on my Bones to think he must return this answer to Christ that I was not willing--but I was bro’t under a Temptation not to attend the publick means fearing that hearing such solemn Truths I did hear would make my damnation the worse; and I did neglect one or two opportunities, but the next Time I went, Mr. Cleaveland was discoursing of the Temptations of Satan and in particular to neglect to attend public means, but he said they must give an account why they neglected an opportunity as well as why they did not rightly emprove it, when they
attended; upon this determined never to neglect any, let the Consequence be what it would; but I was so burdened with such a sense of my sin and guilt, that I saw the Earth might well groan under such a Sinner: my Concern was increased last Summer by the Death of a young man in the Family, I was then at Casco-Bay, but received a Letter some Time after giving an account of young people being under concern here it seemed to make me glad, and I hop’d I sho’d be a Sharer in the Work: I came home just before the Thanksgiving, and was here in the height of the Work; I tho’t for sometime that I was under no Concern, and I can’t say I have had such a Sense, while under Conviction of my actual Sins as some have expressed, but I saw my heart to be full of all Sins, and tho’t if it had not been for restraining Grace I should have actually been the vilest Sinner in the world, and I had a sense of the sin of unbelief, how it made God a Lyar and particularly one Morning at home, and when I came to Lecture that Day Mr. Rogers of Cape-Ann preached upon it, and it seemed he was preaching to me as much as if there had not been another person in the Meeting House--The night before I received any Comfort, I saw God was infinitely just in my condemnations, and that he might justly take all and leave me: I had laboured also under difficulty thinking I had no invitation to come to Christ, I did not see I was the weary and heavy laden or the [illeg.] or had any will to come to Christ, when it was said whosoever will let him come: but hearing Mr. Cleaveland preach a Sermon shewing how all, where the Gospel come were called, were invited to come, let them be who they will or what they will, I saw that I was included in the Call was invited to come and had a warrant to come: I saw that Christ was an able Saviour, but I could not see that he was willing to save me: and when Mr. Cleaveland called upon Sinners to give all up to God and to think all in the hands of Christ, I tho’t I would make the attempt but found my heart give back. . . . But on the quarterly Fast in February last, in the afternoon while Mr Cleaveland was reading the Psalm for the first singing, and when he read those words, My God, my Soul shall fill, with most peculiar Joyes. I saw God was my God by creation and preservation, and my soul said, why not by adoption? and I found I could now trust them with Christ, and my soul rejoiced in God. . . . I have been astonished at the eternal Love of Christ to such an unworthy Creature, and saw I was under infinite obligations to devote myself wholly to Christ and his service, but saw I could add nothing to him: and I think if I know my heart and it does not deceive me, I really loath sin, and hunger and thirst after righteousness, and long to live to God’s Glory; there appears to be nothing in this World that I desire to live here for: I desire your Prayers for me, that I may have the faith of full assurance, and may be enabled to live here as an Heir of Glory.

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