



Memoranda and Documents

“THIS VALLY OF DRY BOONS”: ELIZABETH PECK’S PLEA TO GEORGE WHITEFIELD

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ON November 7, 1763, writing to George Whitefield more than twenty years after the divisive itinerant first blazed through the British-American colonies, Bostonian Elizabeth Peck rejoiced at news of his sixth American tour and entreated him to return to New England on another “Eternal arand.” While Boston was once ablaze with stirrings of the Holy Spirit, she wrote, devotional laxity and parish disputes had nearly smothered the Lord’s “revival of Religion.” As ecclesial jealousy and widespread impiety imperiled her city’s churches, Peck implored the controversial minister to come back and catch New England’s men, women, and children in the “gospol nett.”¹

This article is an introduction to and transcription of Peck’s single-paged correspondence. This hitherto unpublished manuscript provides students and scholars the perspective of an eighteenth-century Boston woman who supported the Whitefieldian revivals. Importantly, Peck’s letter depicts one layperson’s sustained anticipation of religious renewal, even decades after the “surprising work” in Jonathan Edwards’s Northampton and the “storm” of Whitefield’s first colonial tour. Her epistle shows us that many years after the height of New England’s numinous outpourings, alumni of the North American awakenings still expressed intense craving for the personal, converting

I am indebted to Jonathan Yeager and Douglas Winiarski for their gracious reading of early drafts of this article and to Victoria Sweatman for providing images of the letter, and to the Episcopal Church Foundation for crucial research support.

¹Peck to Rev. George Whitefield, November 7, 1763, Manuscript Letter Collection, Special Collections, University of Iowa, Iowa City, IA. Ivory Hovey to George Whitefield, August 5, 1747, Ivory Hovey Papers, Congregational Library & Archives, Boston, MA.

The New England Quarterly, vol. XCIII, no. 4 (December 2020). © 2020 by The New England Quarterly. All rights reserved. https://doi.org/10.1162/tneq_a_00868.

experience of a “felt Christ” instead of lifelong observance of the “Things of Religion: as reading [and] hearing.” At the same time her letter highlights New England’s polarized religious culture, emphasizing the fracturing of post-revival parishes and debilitating sectarianism. With Whitefield’s absence and emerging congregational discord, Peck thought Boston was now a “valley of Dry boons,” desperately lacking the “truer Zeal” it once boasted.²

Little is known of the letter’s author, but time, place, name, and local records suggest Elizabeth Peck was the second wife of the Boston merchant and watchmaker Moses Peck.³ She was born in 1729 to the Charlestown blockmaker David Townsend and his wife Mabel. Married in 1714, Elizabeth’s parents gained full membership to Charlestown’s First Church in 1738 and 1740, and she gained admission in the winter of 1753.⁴ Though we have almost no details regarding her religious life, we know Peck’s native Charlestown was a hub of New England’s early awakenings. In a short diary entry in 1740, the Lynn farmer Zaccheus Collins noted the “great Preacher George Whitefield” had been in Boston and “Round through Charlestown.” New Lights like James Davenport, Andrew Crosswell, and Samuel Buell also visited Boston, attracting “vast Numbers” to their controversial assemblies. Depending on one’s stance, Charlestown was a center of the “Power of the Word,” or a “Disgrace to the Christian Scheme!” Based on her upbringing in Charlestown and her

²Douglas Winiarski, *Darkness Falls on the Land of Light: Experiencing Religious Awakenings in Eighteenth-Century New England* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017), 73–74, 493; Jonathan Edwards, *A Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God* (London, 1737); Peck to Whitefield, November 7, 1763; and “The Relation of Aaron Huchison,” c. 1730s, Pomeroy Family Papers, 1735–1817, Box 1, Connecticut Historical Society, Hartford, CT.

³Brief biographical entries for the Pecks and a collection of Moses Peck’s manuscript letters, can be found at “The Ocom Circle,” Samson Ocom Papers, Dartmouth College, Hanover, NH, www.dartmouth.edu/occom (accessed March 10, 2020).

Moses first married Elizabeth Williston in the summer of 1743. She died in August 1757, and Moses remarried the following year. See *A Report of the Record Commissioners of the City of Boston, Containing the Boston Marriages from 1700 to 1751* (Boston: Municipal Printing Office, 1898), 258; *A Volume of Records Relating to the Early History of Boston, Containing Boston Marriages from 1752 to 1809* (Boston: Municipal Printing Office, 1903), 27. Elizabeth’s gravestone is in Boston’s Granary Burying Ground.

⁴William Richard Cutter, *Genealogical and Personal Memoirs Relating to the Families of the State of Massachusetts* (New York: Lewis Historical Publishing Company, 1910), 2618; Annette Townsend, *The Auchmuty Family of Scotland and America* (New York: Grafton Press, 1932), 151; and William I. Budington, *The History of the First Church, Charlestown* (Boston: Charles Tappan, 1845), 254–55.

attraction to Whitefield, it would be reasonable to assume Elizabeth had "Catch'd the Flame" of revival.⁵

Elizabeth married Moses Peck on January 17, 1758. Though church records do not provide evidence of Elizabeth's admission to her husband's congregation, we know Moses became a member of Boston's elite, pro-revival Old South Church in May of 1742.⁶ By all accounts, Moses appears to have supported New England's awakenings. One who desired "Real, Vitel-Soled piety," his name is found on subscription lists for revivalist works like Jonathan Edwards's *The Life of David Brainerd* (1749) and Joseph Bellamy's *True Religion Delineated* (1750). Moses was also a regular correspondent of the New Hampshire itinerant Eleazar Wheelock, often helping his influential friend obtain "Good Neates Leather," "Shuger," and "butils."⁷ Moses' surviving letters—whether they be concerned with commerce, personal life, or the missionary endeavors of the Mohegan minister Samson Ocom—also provide small references to Elizabeth. "Mrs Peck Gives with me," Moses once wrote to Wheelock, affection "to your Self Mrs Wheelock, & Love to your Son's and Daughters." In a separate exchange, Wheelock offered his "Kindest Salutations" to Moses and his "Dear Spouse."⁸

⁵Zaccheus Collins, July 22, 1740, Diary, 1726–1750, Congregational Library; *The Boston Evening-Post*, July 5, 1742; *The Boston Weekly Post-Boy*, April 5, 1742; Julius Herbert Tuttle, "The Glasgow-Weekly-History, 1743" in Massachusetts Historical Society, *Proceedings*, 53 (1919–1920): 196; "Extracts from the Interleaved Almanacs of Nathan Bowen, Marblehead, 1742–1799" in *Essex Institute Historical Collections* 91 (1955): 167; and John Cleaveland, Poem, October 15, 1743, John Cleaveland Papers, Congregational Library. For more on Charlestown as an important site of revival, see Winiarski, *Darkness Falls*, 156, 203, 268.

⁶It is difficult to determine when Elizabeth began attending Old South. A number of Pecks are present on the church's membership rolls, but the only two mentions of an Elizabeth appear to refer to Moses's first wife, admitted in 1745, and another admitted in 1791. See Hamilton Andrews Hill, *An Historical Catalogue of the Old South (Third Church) Boston, 1669–1882* (Boston: Printed for Private Distribution, 1883), 174.

⁷*Documents of the City of Boston, for the Year 1902* (Boston: Municipal Printing Office, 1903), 4:289; William B. Sprague, *Annals of the American Pulpit; or Commemorative Notices of Distinguished American Clergymen of Various Denominations* (New York: Robert Carter and Brothers, 1857), 1:242; Oliver Ayer Roberts, *History of the Military Company of the Massachusetts Now Called the Ancient and Honorable Artillery Company of Massachusetts: 1738–1821* (Boston, 1897), 2:93; Jonathan Yeager, *Jonathan Edwards and Transatlantic Print Culture* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2016), 59–60. Moses Peck to Eleazar Wheelock, September 1766, and "Mr Eleazar Wheelock of Lebanon Account with Moses Peck of Boston," May 6, 1767, Ocom Papers.

⁸Peck to Wheelock, March 25, 1766; Wheelock to Peck, March 25, 1761, and Samson Ocom, Journal, Nov. 23, 1765, Ocom Papers.

Founded as Third Church in 1669, the Pecks' Old South Church was one of the city's wealthiest congregations and was especially welcoming to Boston's merchants.⁹ It also featured important figures in eighteenth-century New England evangelical culture, including bookseller Daniel Henchman and clergyman Thomas Prince. Though Henchman's own religious proclivities are not entirely clear, he eagerly helped publish numerous sermons by George Whitefield and a number of works by Jonathan Edwards, like *God Glorified in the Work of Redemption* (1731), *A Faithful Narrative of the Surprising Work of God* (2nd ed., 1738), and *An Humble Attempt* (1747).¹⁰ Prince, one of the church's two longtime pastors alongside Joseph Sewall, founded New England's eminent and widely-read revivalist periodical—*The Christian History*. In many senses, the Pecks' church laid at the heart of New England's early evangelical publishing network.

However, church records also show that the Old South congregation suffered from the same combative splintering that plagued so many of New England's revivalist communities. Nathan Wardell Jr. was called before the church in late December of 1743 for his "bold pretence to Inspiration" and his "disorderly" withdrawal from the church. The disaffected Wardell referred to Old South as the "Synagogue of Satan," departed from the congregation, and began preaching under his own authority. The church charged Wardell with the "bold intrusion into the Pastoral Office, without any regular Call or due Qualifications." Emboldened after experiencing the region's most heated era of awakenings, Wardell and other Old South parishioners like John Gridley, William Story, and William Richie Love openly voiced their dissatisfaction with—and separated from—their church in the 1740s.¹¹

In the 1750s and 1760s, nearer to Elizabeth's marriage to Moses and the writing of her letter, Old South went through a significant ecclesial transition.¹² Throughout much of the seventeenth- and

⁹For a more extensive conversation regarding Third Church's historical relationship to Boston's merchant class, see Mark Valeri, *Heavenly Merchandize: How Religion Shaped Commerce in Puritan America* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2010).

¹⁰Yeager, *Jonathan Edwards*, 59–60, 70–71.

¹¹Hamilton Andrews Hill, *History of the Old South Church (Third Church) Boston, 1669–1884* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1890), 1:539–45, 587–88; Winiarski, *Darkness Falls*, 323–24.

¹²As Old South's admission practices changed, so did its leadership. In August 1758, Thomas Prince died ending forty years as pastor of Third Church. Filling Prince's shoes

eighteenth-centuries many New Englanders seeking full church membership had to produce a written "relation" of faith, wherein they concisely displayed before clergy and congregation evidence of sound doctrine, pious aspirations, and engagement with the Lord. As Douglas Winiarski has shown, the first Whitefieldian awakenings saw many pro-revival ministers—including Old South's Thomas Prince and Joseph Sewall—encourage born-again parishioners to anchor their testimonies in the moment of their conversion. Relations of the 1740s often reflected the "excessive zeal of new converts" and, most importantly, offered convincing accounts of men and women's experience of the new birth. In the case of the nineteen-year-old Abigail Brewer, who offered her testimony for admission to Old South in the summer of 1741, this meant recounting how "when i was on the brinck of hel then christ was pleased to reveal himself to me." By contrast, later Old South congregants attained membership without offering any recollection of their salvation moment, instead presenting detailed and flowery statements of theological orthodoxy. In subsequent decades, one was far more likely to hear new members—as the nineteen-year-old Hannah Blake did in 1751—ornately describe their joy in the "pleasure of the Most Holy wise Creator" who decided to "so Curiously mold, so Exact an Elegant Creature as man out of the dust of the Earth, in which that Inestimable Jewell the soul, was to take its Lodging." Membership was no longer contingent upon expressed proof of personal conversion.¹³ Such instances of congregational turbulence and departure from Whitefieldian religious experience may supply us better understanding of Peck's claims that New England was now a "vally of Dry boons," where "Every one [was] seeking his own."¹⁴

While Peck certainly appears to have been reared in New England's most intense season of awakenings, by the time she scribed her mis- sive, many men and women had expressed fear that the "Devil ha[d] prevail'd against the late, great Revival of Religion." From the mid-1740s to the date of Peck's dispatch, numerous awakeners worried

proved to be no easy task, as his first two replacements—the Presbyterian Alexander Cumming and the Princeton product Samuel Blair had both come and gone by the fall of 1769. Douglas Winiarski graciously shared his unpublished essay, "Earnest Desires for the Table of the Lord: Boston Church Admission Narratives, 1702–1767," 33–34.

¹³Winiarski, *Darkness Falls*, 462–3. The transcriptions of Abigail Brewer's and Hannah Blake's testimonies appear in the Appendix of Winiarski, "Earnest Desires for the Table of the Lord."

¹⁴Peck to Whitefield, November 7, 1763.

that radicalism, separatism, and backsliding had dampened New England's spiritual stirrings. In a 1743 letter to the Scottish revivalist William McCulloch, for example, Thomas Prince fretted that religion had been in "dreadfull Decline" after scandalous itinerants started declaring established ministers "unconverted," pushing "People to Separate" from their churches, and "encouraging illiterate men as Preachers." Robust public criticism, ignominious radicalism, sectarian division, and "shift in demand" all helped to detract from the work of revival. These themes abound throughout Peck's letter.¹⁵

However, Peck's letter also indicates that Whitefieldian believers clearly did not abandon the "good Work of the Blessed Spirit" beyond the 1730s and 1740s. Into the 1750s and 1760s, men and women across colonial America continued reporting signs—or their desire for them—of the Spirit's outpourings.¹⁶ For example, in the fall of 1754, the Baptist minister Oliver Hart excitedly recorded numerous diary entries about "some Awakenings" spreading through Charleston, South Carolina. In August of that year, Hart gladly noted that his home was often "Crouded" with young men and women seeking the new birth. The local youth were "much Affected," Hart wrote, and "Could no Longer Contain but Crying out" from conviction of their sin. In November of that same year, the Long Island New Light, James Davenport expressed "deep Lamentation" as he saw around him "Such awful Security & neglect of God." The Lord was due

¹⁵Jonathan Edwards, *Treatise Concerning the Religious Affections* (Boston: 1746), iv; Thomas Prince to William McCulloch, June 15, 1743, Box 10, Folder 120, Park Family Papers, Manuscripts & Archives, Sterling Library, Yale University, New Haven, CT; James Davenport to Stephen Williams, November 14, 1754, General Collection Manuscript Miscellany, Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University, New Haven, CT; and Frank Lambert, "Pedlar in Divinity": *George Whitefield and the Transatlantic Revivals* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), 200–1. As Thomas Kidd has observed, more enthusiastic revivalists like Andrew Crosswell and James Davenport embraced "radical distinctives" so passionately that "evangelical unity could no longer hold." Tethering the movement to uninhibited itinerancy, "mystical religious experience," and the "unruly empowerment of parish laity," the controversy of radical evangelicalism came to encompass much more than theological difference. "The passions of the revivals led not only to heated arguments and noisy exhortations," Kidd writes, "but to something even more threatening to religious establishments: church separations." See Thomas Kidd, *The Great Awakening: The Roots of Evangelical Christianity in Colonial America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2007), 137, 142–43, 174.

¹⁶Simon Frost to Samuel Savage, April 15, 1741, Samuel Savage Papers, 1703–1848, Massachusetts Historical Society, Boston, MA. As Thomas Kidd has shown, northeastern radicals like Ipswich's John Cleaveland and Easthampton's Samuel Buell were among the most prominent publicists of colonial America's later revival season. Kidd, *The Great Awakening*, 267–68.

thanks, however, as there was “Some Degree of the Revival of Religion in Some Places.”¹⁷

We see much of the same into the 1760s when Peck composed her letter to Whitefield. Throughout her correspondence to her son Isaac, the Norwich woman Elizabeth Backus balanced her disappointments toward local religious failures against encouraging reports of seeing a “great work of conviction & conversion” locally and abroad among whites, Indians, and African Americans. In one 1767 letter, Backus noted she had recently heard “from Colchester of a good work their of conviction & conversion & mettings everyday,” though it was still a “cold time amongst us here.” We find this in Whitefield’s writings, too. In a 1764 letter to Eleazar Wheelock, less than a year after receiving Peck’s correspondence, the famous preacher celebrated “sweet seasons at Newbury, Ipswich and Portsmouth—There is really a great awakening in those parts.” New England’s most ardent era of revivals may have ended, but deep into the eighteenth-century believers like Peck still held an enduring hope in the “glories reviel of the work of god.”¹⁸

While Peck and other Whitefieldians did not allow time to diminish their desire for great awakenings, she and her co-laborers lived in a world far different than the one they knew in the 1730s and 1740s. When she wrote her letter, Anglo-Americans had just witnessed the end of the Seven Years’ War (1756–1763)—an event whose international stakes had direct consequences for many New Englanders. It impoverished many families, uprooted men from their homes, sent them into combat, disrupted trade, and caused widespread food deficits.¹⁹ As the diary of Connecticut woman Hannah Heaton shows, the British and French conflict for North American, Caribbean, and

¹⁷Oliver Hart, Diary, August 25, and 26, 1754, Special Collections and Archives, James B. Duke Library, Furman University, Greenville, SC; Davenport to Stephen Williams, November 14, 1754, General Collection Manuscript Miscellany, Beinecke Library. I am grateful for Eric C. Smith quickly sharing his helpful transcriptions archivist Julia Cowart for just as quickly providing me images of the manuscript of the Hart journal.

¹⁸Elizabeth Backus to Isaac Backus, June 16, 1759 and February 3, 1767, Isaac Backus Papers, 1717–1835, Special Collections, John Hay Library, Brown University, Providence, RI, www.riamco.org (accessed March 1, 2020); George Whitefield to Eleazar Wheelock, April 19, 1764, MS 453, George Whitefield Letters, 1739–1769, Archives and Manuscript Department, Pitts Theology Library, Emory University, Atlanta, GA; and Mary Cleaveland Diary, 1742–1762, October 24, 1742, Cleaveland Papers.

¹⁹Catherine Brekus, ed., *Sarah Osborn’s Collected Writings* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2017), 119–20.

Atlantic supremacy was often on the minds of colonists. Being “waked out” of sleep one evening in September 1755, Heaton recalled, her “first thots” were that the “french & indiens was just at my door acoming in to kill me.” The war would have almost certainly touched the Pecks, too, as nearly one-third of the region’s able-bodied men eventually served on the battlefield. By the war’s conclusion, almost every New Englander had a relative called to take up arms.²⁰

As we seek better understanding of Peck’s letter and try to more intimately engage her desperate desire for revival, it is important to appreciate how British and Anglo-American believers saw the far-reaching skirmish shaping their religious lives. As historian Catherine Brekus has shown, the Rhode Island woman Sarah Osborn saw the Seven Years’ War as a “battle between God’s chosen people and ‘Antichrist’” and a “crucial chapter in God’s providential plan.” After learning of the French capture of New York’s Fort William Henry in August of 1757, Osborn scribed in her diary that the American colonists were simply reaping what they had sown. “Lord, I own thy justice in all that has befallen us,” Osborn wrote, “But Lord, have compassion on us, and upon this mount of difficulty, appear and make the Antichrist and the heathen know that Zion’s God has not forsaken her.” Numerous ministers, including Whitefield, agreed with Osborn and understood the war to be a deeply consequential confrontation between British Protestantism and French Catholicism.²¹

Thus, animating Britain’s struggle for colonial land, “liberty,” and trade was its responsibility to distill and protect authentic religion against Catholic tyranny. And as these battles erupted throughout the war’s northeastern American theatre, revival-minded New Englanders like Peck repeatedly interpreted its ebbs and flows as opportunities for awakenings.²² With recent British victories in mind, clergy like the Easthampton itinerant Samuel Buell and the Ipswich separatist John Cleaveland believed the Lord was ushering in a new season of

²⁰Peter Choi has referred to the Seven Years’ War as “nothing less than an international conflagration.” See Peter Choi, *George Whitefield: Evangelist for God and Empire* (Grand Rapids, MI: William B. Eerdmans, 2018), 170; Joyce Chaplin, “The Atlantic Ocean and its Contemporary Meanings” in Jack P. Greene and Philip D. Morgan, eds., *Atlantic History: A Critical Appraisal* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 45; and Harry S. Stout, *The New England Soul: Preaching and Religious Culture in Colonial New England*, 25th Anniversary Edition (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 252.

²¹Brekus, ed., *Sarah Osborn’s Collected Writings*, 191.

²²Choi, *George Whitefield*, 171; Stout, *The New England Soul*, 252–55.

spiritual harvest—especially among Native Americans. Buell told believers in his 1759 ordination sermon for Samson Occom that they were “in a Day in which we have Reason to believe from Scripture Prophecy, and the present Aspect of Divine Providence, that the Latter-Day Glory is dawning.” Upon the signing of the Treaty of Paris in 1763, Cleaveland, who served as an army chaplain during the war, found in Britain’s triumph a providential message. “I have been ready to think,” Cleaveland wrote, “we never had so loud a Call and so wide a Door opened to use Endeavours to propagate the Gospel.” The Lord “so wonderfully crowned the British arms with success” and so graciously bestowed Britons’ dominance over the expansive North American landscape so they could “Spread the Savour of the Knowledge of Christ among the indian Tribes.”²³

As the Seven Years’ War neared its end in the late 1750s and early 1760s, congregations in New England, New Jersey, South Carolina, Vermont, and Virginia reported news of powerful awakenings.²⁴ Enjoying a significant number of surviving relations of faith from the time of the Ipswich harvest, we are afforded a particularly rich view of how some New England men and women perceived and experienced revival in the early-1760s—just as Elizabeth Peck authored her letter to Whitefield. According to Hannah Bear, who gained full admission to the Chebacco Separate Church in the fall of 1764, Ipswich was experiencing a “glorious work of God.” Admitted to the Chebacco church in the same year, Anna Brewer claimed she was “made Sensible that I was a stupid sinner When my Father related what a work there was at Chebacco.” Brewer heard of numinous visitations in Ipswich, with people “crying out under a sense of a hard heart.”²⁵ Leading up to her plea that Whitefield come back to Boston and catch men, women, and children in the “gospol nett,” news was quickly spreading of a new “work of Grace” in her native New England.²⁶

²³Buell quoted in Kidd, *The Great Awakening*, 208; John Cleaveland to unknown, October 7, 1763, Cleaveland Papers.

²⁴Kidd, *The Great Awakening*, 267–81. For published accounts of Easthampton and Chebacco revivals, see Samuel Buell, *A Faithful Narrative of the Remarkable Revival of Religion, in the Congregation of East-Hampton* (1766); John Cleaveland, *A Short and Plain Narrative of the Late Work of God’s Spirit at Chebacco in Ipswich* (1767).

²⁵Hannah Bear, Relation of Faith, 1764, Anna Bennett, Relation of Faith, 1764, and Sarah Allen, Relation of Faith, 1764, Cleaveland Papers.

²⁶Peck to Whitefield, November 7, 1763. As Thomas Kidd notes, clergy like Isaac Backus and Eleazar Wheelock were especially important for circulating news of the colonies’ revivals in the 1760s. See Kidd, *The Great Awakening*, 268.

With the permission of the University of Iowa's Special Collections and University Archives, what follows is a transcription of Peck's plea to Whitefield—just six years before the Anglican revivalist “died, this Morning before Sun-rise” on September 30, 1770.²⁷ I leave intact all the original idiosyncrasies and foibles, and, hopefully, allow the modern-day reader to hear an eighteenth-century New England woman “speak great burthens of soul.”²⁸

Elizabeth Peck to George Whitefield

Boston

novmb the 7—1763

Dear & Reavd Sir

I hearttely congrattulate your safe arriveal in ameraca²⁹—as to your Ill State of health³⁰ the Lord knows what will best sute his own Intrest—& make us most fitt Instruments of serving it in the world—this I am sure that providence that makes us Look most at things unseen & Eternal³¹—however advirs & trying to flesh & blood yet is best—& Espeshaly for one that is sent on an Eternal arand as I hope you are—for when I pray for you it is to one that calls things that are not as tho they ware—& Sure I am that if the Lord Sends you with the Same Spirit—that he first brought you to new-england³² he will give you as

²⁷Daniel Rogers, *Interleaved Almanac Containing Diary*, September 30, 1770, Daniel Rogers Papers, 1745/6–1773, Small Manuscripts Collection, Chicago History Museum, Chicago, IL.

²⁸Peck to Whitefield, November 7, 1763.

²⁹Whitefield made his second-to-last visit to the American colonies during the summer of 1763 and arrived in New England in February 1764. Thomas Kidd, *George Whitefield: America's Spiritual Founding Father* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), 234–36.

³⁰Whitefield's declining health was a popular conversation point in the time surrounding Peck's letter. The London merchant Denny DeBerdts wrote to Eleazar Wheelock in the fall of 1761 and noted that the “Good Dear Mr Whitefield is not yet able to Preach.” Though he “Eats Drink and Sleeps,” DeBerdts wrote, he “cannot get up his Spirits.” Denny DeBerdts to Eleazar Wheelock, October 20, 1761, Occom Papers.

³¹Peck is likely referencing 2 Cor. 4:18 (KJV), in which Paul writes “things which are seen are temporal; but the things which are not seen are eternal.” All subsequent scriptural citations are from the King James Version.

³²Whitefield's first tour of the northeastern colonies took place during the fall of 1739. Kidd, *George Whitefield*, 84–5.

glorious a crop³³ as he did then—for I can assure you Sir it is mid-night Darkness with us now—& if the Lord Should Send the sound of the Silver trumpet³⁴ by you or any other Instrument & proclaim the year of the Lords Releas—O my Soul & many more Shall Re[j]oys more then the Increas of all outward things could make us—& we Shall Love & honner the Instrument—tho I hope not Deifie him—O sir tis an amazing Stupidity that seases whole towns—famalys & minesters & people—that its Inexpresable—O the Dead parents—Dead children—Dead masters & Dead servents &c that fills this vally of Dry boons³⁵—Every one seeking his own—but who is on the Lords Side who—may any In-Different observer cry—Some there are no dout that had Reather no Reviveal should be it there minesters was not used—but those that are waiting for the kingdome of god are crying Lord send by whome thou wilt send³⁶—& O my cry is that the Lord allmighty would bring you to boston with that truer Zeal for god—that Singleness of eye for his glory—that Integrity of heart for his Intrest—that Love for perishing Souls & undanted Resulation for—& that Devine trusting in the Saviour of souls—wich nothing can produce but a keen sence of the Love of Christ to your own—& sure I am that a true Sence of haveing a go[o]ld frind to stand by & Strengthen you will be enough tho no other should appear Indeed seal enough you will find—for partys but the Lord keep you from takeing any part but Christ part that you may catch Some of all partys in the gospol nett³⁷—Dear Sir I should be glad to have a Line from you to know of your health for I belive the air this way will be Restorative

³³Mark 4:8.

³⁴The Christian New Testament contain numerous references to “trumpets.” For a few examples, see Matt. 24:31, 1 Cor. 15:52, 1 Thess. 4:16.

³⁵Ezek. 37:1–3. Whitefieldians regularly employed such imagery when discussing awakenings. In a 1739 letter to revival publicist and Boston minister Benjamin Colman, Englishman Robert Pearsall believed that the events documented in Jonathan Edwards's Northampton and “Crowded Auditories in London & Bristol” suggested “there seems in Many places to be a great Noise Among the Dry Bones.” Pearsall to Colman, April 25, 1739, Box 2, Folder 4, Benjamin Colman Papers, 1641–1806, MHS, www.masshist.org/collection-guides/digitized (accessed July 17, 2020). In a 1742 letter to his wife, Eleazar Wheelock rejoiced at seeing a “Great Shaking among Dry Bones” in Guilford; Eleazar Wheelock to Sarah Wheelock, June 28, 1742, No. 742378 in microfilm edition of *The Papers of Eleazar Wheelock: Together with the Early Archives of Dartmouth College & Moor's Indian Charity School and Records of the Town of Hanover, New Hampshire through the Year 1779* (Hanover, NH, 1971).

³⁶Exod. 4:13.

³⁷As fishing imagery is common in the New Testament, Peck is possibly referring to a few different scriptural excerpts, including Luke 5:10 or John. 21.

to you & I have pray'd it might—there is a great number of minesters
 Just setting out that I belive knows as much what a known & a felt
 Christ³⁸ is—as a blind man Doth collers—O that they may be In-
 closed in the gosple nett its in vain to be of all Sides & face Every
 way—& so I speak great burthens of soul for my christless children &
 Relitives I know if the Lord will make use of you I can pray you hear
 sooner then all the Invitations in the wourld can Do—so I conclude
 sir your Sister & Servent in Christ Elizbeth peck.

³⁸Antirevivalists often took issue with Peck and other Whitefieldians' emphasis on "felt" religion. In one 1740 sermon, the South Carolina Anglican and Whitefield opponent Alexander Garden critiqued revivalists for believing regeneration was a "*Testimony of the Spirit*" known "by certain *Motions, Impulses* or *Impressions*, inwardly on our *Hearts* or *Minds*, as plainly and distinctly *felt* and known, as those of the *Wind*, or other *Material Thing*." Similarly, Plymouth's Josiah Cotton found that New Lights too often declared "Holiness of Heart & Life is no good Evidence of Justification." Instead, Cotton wrote, revivalists like Samuel Buell and James Davenport taught men and women that true conversion "lays in Some *Feelings* or *Sensations* of the Love of God." See Alexander Garden, *Regeneration, and the Testimony of the Spirit. Being the Substance of Two Sermons Lately Preached in the Parish Church of St. Philip, Charles-Town, in South-Carolina* (Charlestown, SC, 1740), 3; Josiah Cotton, "History of the Cotton Family," c. 1728–1755, MS Am 1165, 331, Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge, MA. The manuscript is available at www.hollis.harvard.edu.

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