

Appendix to "Justise Must Take Plase": Three African Americans Speak of Religion in
Eighteenth-Century New England

Following are the documents that were included in "Justise Must Take Plase."

**Box 1, folder 1b, John Cleaveland Papers, Phillips Library,
Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, Mass.**

The Confession of Flora Negro

To the New-Gathered Congregational Chh in Chebacco—

Rev'd Hon'd and Beloveds

I freely Confess and acknowledge unto you as in the Presence of the great God and his Elect Angels, as also what I expect to answer to, before the Judge of the quick and Dead, at the Tribunal Seat of Jesus Christ; that I have been made truly sensible, that my conduct of late has been such as Justly to cool your charity for, and be matter of just offence against me—I have sinned against Heaven and in your sight and am not worthy to be reckoned among the Sons and Daughters of God; As to my Sin it is not hid from you, God has bro't it to light by his providence[,] Oh the great God is my witness how I have seen it to be of a Crimson Colour & of a Scarlet Die attended with grievous aggregations indeeds[,] I do therefore beg leave for your Satisfaction my own Humiliation & Abasement & the warning of others: to Confess and Lay open before you, what were the provocations I gave the Lord to leave me to fall into Temptation and Sin, what apprehensions I have had and Tryals respecting my Fall, and the Satisfaction I have received that the Lord hath covered my sin with a mantle of his pardoning Love. As to my provocations they were indeed great for God does not afflict willingly, nor leave his pardoned ones without a Just Cause, the Provocations, I gave, that have Especially been made plain to my view; [were?] spirituall Pride, Ingratitude, Unwatchfulness and Levity or Lightness; spiritual [illeg.] rise up after manifestations of God's smiles, & great Freedom to utter [the] same before men, & also after freedom in persuading sinners to repent [sins?] and live, Ingratitude, also that Beastlike Satanical & God provoking Sin to be Unmindful of the God that made me, and lightly to esteem the Rock of my salvation would frequently creep in upon me—and Unwatchfulness and Levity also, especially when I did not feel much bowed down by the Majesty of Heaven, & hereby a wide Door was hath been opened, I have seen for Satan to spread his Temptations and Snares to beguile souls and stir them up to wantonness and concupiscence; Yea! To provoke God to leave them as it were to Satan and their own Lusts [illeg.]: And what can poor souls do? when God is thus provoked? Thus I provoked God; oh, pray for & take learning by such an Instance as I am.

As to the apprehensions I have had & tryals respecting my Fall they are many, I have had Temptations to seek ways, to hide my Iniquity from Men, but the Lord in Mercy frustrated them all, and gave me to see that it was against him I had sinned, and done wickedly in his sight, And also gave me to Behold my sin in some measure in a true Light; as it was attended with most heinous Aggregations indeed; as being against a pardoning God,—after pardon received—and wonderful endearing Manifestations of his Love and Favour to me, Tending not only, to make such settle down in their opposition (as being in the right) that have all along appeared against the work of God: but also to

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Occasion the holy name of God, to be blasphemed, especially by such as I have heretofore endeavoured to persuade and beseech to Embrace a precious Christ—but Time and your Patience would fail me to relate particularly, what Darkness has been spread over my Mind and cast in my way, by reason of this my Fall. What shame has covered me before Men and Confusion of Face before God; how God frown'd upon me and hid his Face from me, how Just it appeared to me, for God to cast me below [p. 2] Sodomites, yea, below Devils in Torment—now my soul sunk down into the Deep Mire where there was no standing; and now the bellows [?] and floods overflowd me. But while I was in this Condition God gave me a Spirit of Prayer, out of the Deep I cry'd to him [illeg.] God, out of the Depths of Confusion Shame Sin Impotency and Unworthiness, and the Lord heard, to my Surprize & Astonishment, he ran to my Relief, he kissed me with the Kisses of his mouth and I found his Love to be better than wine.

The way that God Took with me, to pluck my Feet out of the Miery Clay and horrible Pitt, was by bringing home to my soul some Texts of holy Scripture. The first were those blessed words of our Saviour, John 7.37—that great Day of the Feast Jesus stood and Cryed, if any man Thirst Let him come unto me and Drink; at first I was not sensible of much Spiritual Thirsting, but soon after they were bro't with power to my mind, I found some thirsting, but Unbelief immediatly step'd in, and argued, that the Call could not be to me, my sin was so great: which caused me to Question whither it was bro't to my Mind by the holy Ghost, but These workings were soon silenced by those words in Isai: 63.1—It is I that speak in Righteousness, mighty to save: Which came with such Evidence & Demonstration that I was not only satisfyed that Christ called me before to Drink of his pardoning and healing Love but also that altho' my Sin was of a Crimson Colour and Scarlet Die attended with greivous aggregations; yet there was enough in Christ to pardon—O them words: mighty to Save silenced unbelief & reviv'd my shattered and disconsolate Soul[,] now the pardoning Love of God again flowed into my Soul & caused my Heart to melt & flow with penitential streams; I could then have wished my head a Fountain & my Eyes Rivers of water to weep over my Sins; never did I before, find my heart so Resolved, never to harbour Sin or to be reconciled again to it as now I found it. No Tongue of Men or Angels can fully Express (it seems) what an Indignation & Revenge boiled in my Heart against myself, and the Sin that I had been besett with & overtaken by: O I beg your Prayers for me that I may bring forth much Fruit, meet of Repentance and be made to Discover to all in my futer Life Conversation Conduct and Behaviour, the Truth of what I have now been Declaring unto you. I beg your Forgiveness. I pray you to Restore me to your Charity and Fellowship and the Privileges that I have forfeited, by my Fall, I beg Desire your Prayers for me, that in Every Relation I might walk becoming one professing Godliness, & adorn the Doctrine of God my Saviour in all Things[,] yea that I may be made more circumspect than ever heretofore in my Walk, so as to declare God's Glory abroad; And Let all that have named the Name of Christ, take warning by me, not to let down your Watch for such will Certainly fall into Temptation as I Do.

Your's &c,
Flora Negro
Her F Mark

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**Records of the Canterbury Separate Church, 1733-1815,
Connecticut Historical Society, Hartford, Conn.**

[on verso: "Negrow Grinnig of Canterbury"]

this the 29 day of March 1754

As I have ben Instructed by the Lord so I think it is Nesseary to Indite fue things which I have brought Into the church[,] Broth brotherin some say that we are the seed of Canaan and some say that we are the Tribe of Ham but Let that be as it will Justise must Take Plase therefore I will I shou you how Abraham came by his servents in the 15 Chapt of Geneseis 18 wher the Lord Covenant with Abraham saying unto thy seed have I given this Land from the river uf eupherates and the kenites and the kenizites and the kadmonites and also in the 17 Chap of Genesies and 8 vers and I will give unto the[e] and to thy seed after the Land wherein thou art a stranger all the Land of Canaan for an everlasting possession and I will be the[i]r God and In the 12 vers and he that is eight days old shall be circumsized among you every man child In your Generation he that Is born In thy house or bought with mony of any strangers which Is not of thy seed and now bretherin thes strangers that Abraham bought with mony were of Ca kanites now bretherin cast your eyes upon the fase of the earth how god hath set the bounds to the nation and that non[e] shold impose upon another nation 10 Chapter of Genesis 20 vers these are the sons of ham after there families after there Tongues In their Contries and in their nation and now bretherin suppose any nation shold have a continual war amongst themselves and any of you should supply them of ammonition and when you have don this you will steel as many of them and bring them over Into your Contry to make slaves of them their soul and body as much as in thereby [?] 3 Chap of proverbs and 30 vers strive not with a man without Cause if he hath don the[e] no harm and now in the 21 first Chapter of Exodus and 16 vers and he that steel A man and selet him or if he be found in his hands he shall surely be put to death the first of kings and 9 Chapter 16 verse and 20 vers their you will se[e] how pharaoh king of Egypt had gon yup [ie, up] and taken gezer and given as a present unto his dafter Solomon wife theis were of Cannaan and so to the 21 vers and their Children that were left after them in their Land whome the Children of Israel were not able utterly to destroy upon thoes did Solomon levy a tribute of bonds service unto this day and they were Cannanits Jeremiah 34 Chapter and 14 verse at the end of seventh year let you go every man his brother in hebrew which hath ben sold unto the[e] and when he hath served the six year thou shall let him go free from the[e] and now bretherin you may se[e] for your selves th[r]ou[gh]out the Scriptures that every nation that is taken by conquest you may make slaves

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[P]hillis Cogswell, Negro

[I] was wro't upon in the former Reformation, going to [the?] meetings and seeing others under concern, bro't me under concern fearing I should be left while others were saved; but my concern seemed to be for awhile from an apprehension that I had no convictions; but one night when I came out of the Meeting-House, I sat down and tho't how sad it was that I must leave the Meeting without receiving any Benefit, but those words coming to my mind, Paul may plant and Apollos water, but it is God that giveth the increase, I went home and went to bed, and the last I tho't of before I fell asleep was a couple of verses in the cradle-hymn; but in the night I awaked up and all my sins seem'd to be set in order before my Eyes, and they appeared as numerous as the Sands on the Sea Shore, and I cried out good Lord what must I do to be saved—Jesus thou son of David have Mercy on me; and for about a week after together I kept crying for Mercy, and it seem'd wonderful that I was out of hell, wonderful sparing Mercy.—I was made sensible my heart was nothing but Sin, and that I had never done any Thing but sin against God and it would have been just with God to cast me into hell: I took to reading the Bible, and those words in Isaiah, Ho every one that thirsteth let him come to the waters, and he that hath no money let him come, &c, and that, come now and let us reason together saith the Lord tho' your sins be as scarlet, seemed to be comforting Texts, they came into my mind often and yet I could not get hold on them: and sometimes while I was reading the Bible I sho'd be worried with a tho't that the wicked one would appear to me:—but one Day while I was about my work those words came to my Mind, come unto me all ye that labour and are heavy laden and I will give you rest, I tho't with myself, I am weary and heavy-laden, I have a burden of guilt lying on me[,] Christ is all-sufficient to give rest—I may come; I will come to Christ for Rest, and my Burden was immediately taken away and I felt so light as if I could fly: Christ appeared lovely to my soul.—Sin appeared odious to me, and I tho't I should never sin any more; but I find when I would do good, evil is present with me and expect it will while in this Life, tho' I desire to be made perfect:—and don't allow myself in any known Sins; I desire your prayers for me and your acceptance of me:—I bless God he has given me to rejoyce with those that do rejoyce in this blessed Time of the outpouring of God's Spirit.

propounded April 22, 1764