

AUTOBIOGRAPHY

OF

REV. DANIEL MERRILL.

[The account of how Daniel Merrill and his congregation repudiated their former views of baptism and became a N. T. Baptist congregation]

The following narration of some portions of the Rev. Daniel Merrill's history, written by himself, was forwarded to the Agent of the Baptist General Tract Society, for publication, a few weeks previous to his decease, which took place in June, 1833. A letter accompanying the manuscript was written by his daughter, at his dictation; disease having rendered him unable to perform the labor.

CONVERSION AT AGE 13

When I was in the thirteenth year of my age, the Lord gave me to hope in his mercy. Whilst not far from completing my fourteenth year, he began to move me to be a minister and witness for him.

SERVICE IN THE REVOLUTIONARY WAR AS A TEEN AGER

When a lad of fifteen, or rising, I engaged in the Revolutionary struggle, for the term of three years, during which period I saw human nature in its various aspects, from the most degraded, up to decent morality and hopeful piety; and rode in company with Mr. Israel Evans, one of the more noted Chaplains of the army, into most of the States then in the Union. A fine opportunity was thus afforded me to look at men and things, but not into books. When the war closed, I gladly returned to reside in the beloved paternal mansion.

DECISION TO FOLLOW MINISTERIAL PATH

My busy thoughts were now contemplating and contrasting things which might be. My mind was balancing between the gospel ministry and mercantile pursuits. My age, being then in my nineteenth year, was the principal if not the only objection against entering directly upon the preparatory studies which I then considered indispensable pre-requisites to the sacred office. This office had, for more than four years, been at times the object of consideration, particularly on my return from the army.

SEVEN YEARS OF PRIVATE AND COLLEGE THEOLOGICAL STUDIES

I soon opened my mind and related my principal objection to one or more particular friends. My objection was at once considered of less magnitude than I had attached to it. I soon accorded in judgment with my friends, and with very little loss of time commenced a seven years' course of close application to literature and theology.

MERRILL'S PROFESSED IGNORANCE OF THE BAPTISTS AND HIS FIRST ACQUAINTANCE WITH BAPTIST BRETHREN

From my earliest childhood to the time in which I commenced my literary course, I had never, to my knowledge, seen more than one Baptist minister, nor heard any one commend the peculiar tenets of the Baptists; but had frequently heard them spoken against with visible displeasure. I eagerly conceived, and for a considerable time retained an opinion of the Baptists, not honorable to their persons, their doctrines, or their practices.

During my literary pursuits, I occasionally became partially acquainted with some of their leaders, and with a few of their private brethren. Their apparent piety, and the manifest honesty with which they adhered to their sentiments, mellowed somewhat my asperity, and produced a certain kind of pit, connected with a commencing desire that they might see and renounce their hurtful errors, and give us the pleasure of receiving them into the community of the orthodox Congregationalists.

FIRST SERMON IN SEDGWICK-1791

In the year 1791, having gone the round of my preparatory studies, I entered upon the service which I had long contemplated. The first Lord's-day in which I discoursed publicly to any people, was in this town. In the first discourse which I here delivered, the Lord mercifully worked with me and confirmed the word, as the signs which followed abundantly evinced.

REVIVAL BLESSINGS IN EARLY PREACHING

From that day and forward, a solemn and deeply affecting sense of the exceeding sinfulness of sin, of the danger to which it exposes the transgressor, and the necessity of being forgiven, rested upon the people, and increased until, as it was hoped, near one hundred were turned from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, during the twenty-three weeks in which I was with them that season. The same appearances and fruits manifested themselves in every town where I preached more than one Sabbath, during eighteen months in which I was absent from this place.

1793-BECOMES PERMANENT PASTOR OF SEDGWICK CHURCH

In 1793, I returned to this people, and was ordained as the Pastor of the Church. In the year 1798 and '99, a great reformation took place among the people. In 1802, also, the divine influences were remarkable in both the church and society. Several Baptist ministers, hearing of the good hand of our God upon us, visited us and preached many lectures. We received them kindly, for they proved to be men of God.

1802-THE DESIRE TO CORRECT THE SO-CALLED "ERRANT" BAPTIST BRETHERN

From time to time my acquaintance with the Baptists increased, and my affection for them, as partakers of the divine nature, and possessing like precious faith, also increased; so did also my desire for a union with them—not by turning to them, but by their conviction of what I believed to be their error, and by turning from it, as least so far that we might appear one people, and have nothing to mar our union, or hinder our work. I thought so much of the importance of this union as to write a long letter to one of their most useful and devoted ministers.

Yes, I was so deeply impressed with the urgent necessity of this union among the children of God, of the service which I might render the Baptists by stating before them, in plain scripture evidence, the errors to which they adhered, and the certain correctness of the general system of my brethren, the Congregationalists—for I know not that I then had one doubt but what such evidence was attainable—

THE PLAN TO WRITE A BOOK TO SHOW BAPTISTS THEIR ERROR

And I also had such an interesting view of the vast advantage which such an event would almost certainly produce to the cause of truth and of Christ in the world, that I gave myself with a degree of decision, to a careful and critical review of the oracles of God, **that I might write a book and show the Baptists, from the unerring word of God, the certain scripture evidence of their errors,** and of the hurtful nature of those errors, and of their obligation to renounce them, and come up to the help of the Lord, to the help of the Lord against the common foe, by uniting their strength with ours.

A SHOCKING DISCOVERY: FRAIL EVIDENCE!

Upon the above object, I contemplated day and night, and perused the sacred volume, and re-perused it, from Genesis to Revelations, and thought myself nearly prepared to write my proposed book. But upon a review of my arguments, I found that in some of the links of my chain there was not that full strength of evidence which I could wish.

I therefore sat myself to a renewed research, that I might strengthen any part which seemed not sufficiently strong to move a world. **For truth was my object** as well as victory, and my eye was principally upon the one, that I might win the other. I did not, in this momentous concern, covet principally the praise of men nor the show of victory, but the prevalence of all-conquering truth.

THE INTENSE SEARCH FOR N. T. TRUTH

Thus was I searching for truth as for a hidden treasure. This search for truth began, in continuance of time, to be painful; not from any doubt where it was, or what it was, but from my not finding the evidence of it in that fulness and clearness which I expected. **This anxious search was continued not for weeks and months merely, but for more than two years.** Towards the close of my research for what I had long believed to be the truth, and for that evidence of it which might compel every honest Baptist to buy it, by exchanging his errors for it, my pain became severe.

DEDUCTIONS FROM RESEARCH SCRIPTURE DOES NOT SUPPORT INFANT BAPTISM

To my great disappointment and extreme regret, I was driven to the then very sorrowful conclusion, that the **sacred scriptures did not afford clear and direct evidence to support my own practice.** Yes, I was compelled to believe that there was no certain precept nor plain example in the Bible to authorize the administering of any gospel ordinance to an unconscious babe.

I still fully believed that there were gospel ordinances, and that the Bible did define with certainly what these ordinances were, and to whom they should be administered; but I very sensibly felt that I knew not either. For as yet I was not merely no Baptists, but possessed a very strong and powerful opposition against being one. At the same time all satisfactory evidence of the truth of my own practice failed me.

THE EXCRUIATING DILEMMA

This was a painful condition. At this time eight children were about being presented to have the rite of sprinkling administered to them. I considered that I was under no obligation to go, nor even had liberty to go, where the Lord would not go with me, and as he had refused me the light of evidence in favor of this rite, I refused to administer it. My pain and anxiety increased upon me. I explicitly revealed my solicitude to very few. However, my brethren could not but know that my mind was burdened; and some of their minds also began to be.

THE CONGREGATION BECOMES INVOLVED IN THE SEARCH FOR THE BIBLICAL TRUTH

By my particular desire, the church, with but three dissenting voices, agreed to observe a day of fasting and prayer before the Lord, to implore his merciful interference, that we might not renounce the practice to which we had been accustomed, if that practice was in agreement with the truth; and that we might not continue to reject the sentiments of the Baptists, if those sentiments were in accord with His revealed will.

MENTAL CONFLICT OVER BIBLICAL PASSAGE

The day was observed with much solemnity. With painful solicitude did our devout supplications ascend to the Father of our spirits, that he would scatter light in our paths, settle the doubtful minds, and lead us in the good and right way.

The solemn day passed! But light appeared not; certainly not to me. I was in extreme darkness; in darkness very sensibly to be felt. Not darkness as to the gospel of the grace of God, but darkness as to the gospel of the kingdom. I knew not of what the kingdom of God was composed—of course I knew not what it was.

Whether it was "the people of the saints of the Most High," Dan. 8:27; whether it was composed of a "prepared people," such as John made ready for the Lord, Luke 1:17; whether it was "a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a peculiar people," I Peter 2:9; whether it was indeed "one new man," or one new body of men, such as the world never saw till Jesus came, Eph. 2:15; or whether it was the Jewish church continued, and so composed of saints and sinners promiscuously, as they happened to be comprised in the families where the masters of the households believed.

UNCERTAINTY OVER MANNER AND MODE OF BAPTISM

Besides, I was in uncertainty as to be comprised in the families where the masters of the households believed. Besides, I was in uncertainty as to the manner in which persons should be visibly introduced into this kingdom, as much as I was in relation to the gospel subjects. In short, I neither knew what gospel baptism was, whether sprinkling, pouring, or immersion; or who were to be baptized.

CONTINUING STRUGGLE OF SOUL OVER BAPTISM

In this state of distressing uncertainty and profound ignorance, I continued for nearly three months, growing nothing better, but rather worse. I read, I meditated, I fasted, I prayed, but all apparently to no purpose. The subject was revolving in my mind day and night, sleeping and walking. I contemplated upon the different churches in the world, and upon their varied practices, but could be satisfied with none.

At times I thought myself ready, or nearly so, to be any thing the Lord would have me be. However, I had as yet an unconquered antipathy against being a Baptist. At times my carnal nature so lifted up itself that I could not bear the idea of being called one. I was not willing as yet to become as a little child in this case.

CONFLICT ENDS WITH SUBMISSION TO GOD'S WILL AND GOD'S WORD

Therefore the Lord kept me, from month to month, in Egyptian darkness, and in distressing solicitude, till I felt my whole heart give way, and my will bow, and I said, Lord make me what seemeth thee good. At this moment, I surrendered myself and the whole concern unto the Lord, without so much as a known mental reservation. Thus, by an unconditional submission to the will of God, I was enabled to roll my burden upon him, and found peace.

THE AGONIZING FEAR THAT THE BAPTISTS MIGHT BE RIGHT

In all my distress, and through the whole of the sore conflict which I sustained, my heart was, so far as I know, ever fixed in this one point, that whatsoever the Lord might show me was the truth, that I would practice. But in my most sorrowful hours, and in my most fervent petitions, I recollect no instance, except the above, in which I had not, to say the least, a latent request, that he would not show me that the Baptists were right.

I have frequently heard persons speaking as though it were a small thing to become a Baptist, as though they would as readily become a Baptist as continue what they were, provided the Baptist sentiments were correct. Such persons possess a very superficial knowledge of what it takes to remove the strong and deep-rooted educational prejudices which those possess who have always believed, and have undertaken to teach and defend the long established traditions of their fathers.

THE DIFFICULT FORK IN THE ROAD

DEFEND TRADITION OR CHANGE DOCTRINAL SENTIMENTS?

These men find that no common excitement will move them to change their religious principles and practices in relation to the church of God. These must be favored with uncommon degrees of the spirit of Christ, or pass through much sore travail, or both, before they will so count all things but loss for Christ, as to be willingly Baptists.

THE SPIRITUAL PRICE FOR SEPARATION FROM ERRANT BRETHREN

It is indeed a great thing to become an honest and understanding Baptist from the ranks of the world. It is a still greater thing to become one from the ranks of the Pedobaptist church. But the greatest sacrifice is made by those who are leaders in the erroneous church, when they renounce their work of error, and unite with the kingdom which the God of heaven hath set up.

These suffer the loss of all their labor in building; not of all their labor in preparing materials, if they are indeed good materials, for these will be saved, yet it may be so as by fire. These good materials are, so far as may be, to be removed from the erroneous and hurtful position in which they have been placed, and put into the Lord's building, where they of right belong. Where this is effected, and it should always be most devoutly endeavored, by all gospel means, as opportunities may offer, much hard feeling is excited, and angry words are uttered.

THE REAL DESIRE OF THE BAPTISTS

The Baptists are charged with a desire and purpose of dividing and breaking down all other churches, and this is said of them as though they had a mischievous purpose. Whereas all the Baptists desire in the case is, to preach the glad tidings of the kingdom of God, and so to preach them that they may have such an overcoming efficacy as to prevail with all the people of God, to leave the Pedobaptist church, and every other erroneous habitation, and be joined to this kingdom of God. When the Baptists thus speak, they are sometimes angrily told, "You think nobody right but yourselves." To be sure, every honest Baptist does thus think, with relation to church building; for there are not two different and opposite ways of building the house of God. If the Baptists are right in this matter, all who differ from them must err from the truth.

NO COMPROMISE POSSIBLE IN TAKING THE BIBLICAL SIDE

There is in this business of church building, no halving the matter, nor any honest and honorable principle of compromise between the Baptists and any other class of men under heaven. If the Baptists in this particular are in agreement with the word and commandment of Jesus Christ, then all the classes of Pedobaptists are, without one exception, mere pretenders; and their churches are all illegitimate. This conclusion is irresistible. Many may be very angry at it, but there is no moving it. Every honest and unprejudiced mind will admit its certain force.

The kingdom which the God of heaven promised to set up, was never to be destroyed, nor was it ever to be left to other people; but it was to break in pieces and consume all opposing powers and kingdoms; Dan. 2:44. [Merrill is dispensationally confused here. These passages are millennial verses, not church age texts.]

This kingdom was at its commencement to be the people of the saints of the Most High; Dan. 7:27. And the kingdom and dominion and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven was promised to them. They were to be all taught of God; Isaiah 54:13.

This kingdom was, when first set up, the people of the saints; for it was constituted out of the people which John had made ready and prepared for the Lord; and it is the only people of saints that has even been organized in our world into a kingdom. We have no account of any other; and this kingdom was never to be destroyed, nor left to any other and different class of people. All that originally composed this kingdom were baptized penitents; they were all by profession saints, and none but such as profess so to be, have ever been added since; for it was not to be left to other people.

BAPTISTS FORM THE ONLY N. T. MODEL FOR THE CHURCH

There is no people now in the world, nor has there ever been a people in the world, save those called Baptists, who have ever answered to the model of the kingdom of God, as it is given us either in the Old Testament or in the New. If there be any other model, we ask in what book, and chapter and verse it may be found? If there be no other model, then the people now termed Baptists, are the church of God, and the continuators of that church, of that kingdom, which the Lord Jesus Christ sat up in Judea eighteen hundred years ago.

MERRILL'S AMAZING DISCOVERIES

(1)

BELIEVER'S BAPTISM ONLY

When I found that there was in the sacred scriptures no model for building a Pedobaptist church, I stopped where every honest man ought to stop, and refused to place my faith and build my practice upon the traditions and commandments of men.

And when I found that a profession of repentance was an indispensable pre-requisite to admission into the kingdom of heaven, or church of God, Mat. 3:2, and 4:17; and that those who were baptized with the baptism of repentance, and none other, were admitted as members of that kingdom of God which Christ was to set up, and did set up, Luke 1:17, Mark 3:13, 14, Luke 17:21;

(2)

BAPTISM IS BY IMMERSION ONLY, NO SPRINKLING OR POURING SCRIPTURALLY POSSIBLE

And when I found that Christ's "prepared people" were baptized in the river, or in Enon, because there was much water there, and that they were buried in baptism, Mark 1:5, John 3:23, Rom. 6:4, Col. 3:12; and that sprinkling and pouring, for baptism, were of mere human invention, having no countenance in the Bible, but were of comparatively recent origin, and were an imposition upon the comparatively recent origin, and were an imposition upon the world, and a very unwarranted substitute for the gospel ordinance of baptism, I soon engaged in the important labor of showing these interesting particulars to my people.

PREACHING THE SEVEN SERMONS ON THE MODE AND SUBJECTS OF BAPTISM

The first Lord's Day after my mind was relieved from the long and distressing perplexity, which the hurtful traditions of men had occasioned me, I delivered to my congregation the substance of the first two of the seven sermons, which I speedily caused to be published for their perusal.

From Sabbath to Sabbath, I ceased not to preach and show the glad tidings of the kingdom of God. I showed my brethren, in the most friendly and undisguised manner, the difference between what we had been, and what the Lord Jesus in his word required us to be. They, like the noble Bereans, searched the scriptures daily, to ascertain whether these things were so. Probably in no place of the same population, have the scriptures been read more diligently, more extensively, or more prayerfully, than they were in this place, for several months.

THE CONGREGATION PONDERES THEIR UNBIBLICAL STATUS

For this people were at that time a thinking and remarkably religious people. About one half of the adults were considered truly pious. They were not generally possessed of that pride of opinion which impels many to pursue a long beaten track, without suffering a review of its correctness. But they were humble, and desirous of knowing and doing the will of God. They therefore gave me a candid, patient, and solicitous hearing; and then searched the scriptures, that they might know the correctness or fallacy of the things they had heard.

The above course, I and my people pursued from week to week, and from month to month. I preached to them the gospel of the grace of God, and the gospel of the kingdom of God; but administered no gospel ordinance for nine months. For the first three months, I knew not to whom the ordinances of Baptism and the Lord's Supper belonged. During the last six, I considered myself not a qualified administrator.

It was a time of thinking, and of feeling, with them and with me. For I had to win them to the things of the kingdom of God, or to leave them. They had to renounce those traditions and commandments of men, which make void the laws of the kingdom, or part with their minister. I shunned not to declare unto them the whole counsel of God.

They generally did not refuse to hear, nor did they reject the counsel of God, to their own hurt, as the Pharisees did, not being baptized with the baptism of John.

THE CONGREGATION'S POSITIVE RESPONSE TO THE BIBLICAL TRUTH REVEALED BY THE SERMONS

But truth was a powerful leaven in the midst of them; and by the abounding grace of God, they soon began to be made free by the truth. In about four weeks from the time my mind was liberated, I was informed that one of my deacons was brought out. This was the appropriate term then used. Not very long after, some of the brethren had their eyes so opened as to begin to see the things of the kingdom of God. And by this time or before, they were somewhat generally under serious, not to say deep concern. The congregation was large, and much interested on the important truths, both new and old, which were delivered to them.

MERRILL'S SERMONS CREATE AREA-WIDE INTEREST

The unusual things which were taking place in Sedgwick, were reported all around. From the adjacent towns, numbers came to hear for themselves, and were convinced that the Jewish church continued, and all the Judaizing teachers who supported it, were themselves unsupported by the Bible.

CONTINUED PREACHING ABOUT THE ORDINANCES FOR BELIEVERS ONLY

I pursued my undeviating course, showing and proving from the scriptures, that none but those who have gospel hearts have any fair claim to gospel ordinances. I showed and testified that the gospel presented a way over which the unclean had no right to pass, and that the penitent, the believing, and such as received the word gladly, were the only invited and welcome travelers to the positive institutions of Jesus Christ.

I further testified that the sprinkling or pouring of water on unconscious babes, or upon any others, for baptism, was a practice unknown in the Bible; and was human substitute for a divine ordinance, and that it was hurtful to men, and an abomination in the sight of the Lord.

PREACHING THE TRUTH DRAWS OPPOSITION

Whilst I was thus preaching, and with an unsparing hand vindicating the ways of God to men, some were offended, and one told me that he should be a Baptist, and that twice as many would be Baptists, if I were less pointed in my preaching. However, I judged the better way was to preach the preaching the Lord bade me. I did so. But some, in a remote part of the town, were so displeased that they determined to drive me from the town, or at least from the pulpit. But in their movements the Lord had a purpose different from theirs.

These opposers of the right ways of the Lord, seven in number, got up a petition with their own names subscribed, and two others which were said to be forged, to the select-men to call a town meeting, to act on the following particulars: 1. To choose a Moderator. 2. To see if the town will receive the Rev. Daniel Merrill as a town minister upon the Baptist platform. 3. To see if the town will reject the Rev. Daniel Merrill from his salary, since he has become a Baptist. 4. To see if the town will reject Rev. Daniel Merrill from the pulpit since he has become a Baptist.

THE DECISIVE TOWN ACTION IN FAVOR OF MERRILL

The meeting was duly warned to be holden on the 28th of January, 1805. the day came, but it was one of the most uncomfortable, if not the most so, that I ever saw, for travelers to be long exposed to the open air. The wind was strong, and the sleet next to insupportable. The minds of the people, however, were in such a state, that a storm still more severe might not have kept them from assembling. The meeting was said to be more numerously attended than any town meeting ever before held, except an annual one.

The meeting was opened, the Moderator chosen, and the interesting question proposed, Will the town receive the Rev. Daniel Merrill as the town minister, upon the Baptist platform? The Moderator pronounced it a vote. Some one of the opposers thought it doubtful.

A DECISIVE VICTORY FOR THE TRUTH

A division was ordered, but the majority appeared so overwhelming, that the few scattering objectors did not wish to be counted. The other questions produced, without any hesitancy, the following resolutions: that the salary and pulpit should continue as they had previously been.

Thus the enemy hurried the removal of difficulties out of my way, and placed the whole subject where I could have wished. When I thought it a convenient time, I appointed a church meeting. We were then in number 189, and if I mistake not, the most numerous of any church of any name in the District, now State of Maine. And a more heavenly and devoted company of practical saints I have seldom, if ever, seen.

CHURCH VOTES TO HOLD A BAPTIST COUNCIL

When the church had convened and interchanged their thoughts upon what it became us farther to perform, they voted to invite several Baptist churches to send their ministers and delegates to meet in Sedgwick, and form an Ecclesiastical Council for the purpose of baptizing us, forming us into a regular Baptist church, and of setting, in due form, our minister over us.

THE DRAMATIC CHANGE TO A BAPTIST CONGREGATION WITH ATTENDANT SPIRITUAL BLESSINGS

On the 10th of May, 1805, the principal part of the ministers and delegates were landed upon our shore. On the 13th, [14th] if I mistake not, they buried sixty-three of us with Christ in baptism, upon a personal profession of our faith in him, and the next day twenty-three, and thus *prepared* us to be constituted into a church of God, and pronounced us to be so, and ordained the former minister to be the under shepherd of this little flock. In about six weeks time, I baptized fifty-eight more.

From one time to another, I have baptized some of the remnants of the Congregational church who were not before ready to submit to the baptism which was from heaven. And some, very few of the, are yet apparently believing that the baptism which is of men will answer for them, and thus reject the counsel of God against themselves.

JOHN'S BAPTISM OF REPENTANT SINNERS THE ONLY PROPER MANNER OF BAPTISM

John's baptism, which is the baptism of repentance, or the baptizing of the penitent, is the only baptism which was ever given from heaven as a baptismal ordinance to be observed by the church of God; and is the discriminating ordinance, and is avowedly and honestly practiced by all the churches of God, and by none else.

On the other hand, all who reject this baptism, and yet professedly adhere to the gospel ordinance of baptism, hold to the baptism of impenitence, or to the baptizing of the impenitent; and this is their discriminating rite; and all who embrace this baptism are styled Pedobaptists, because they administer this rite to their children.

That the baptism of John was from heaven, is a fact long since decided by the Lord Jesus Christ; Matt. 22:25. Also that the Pharisees and lawyers who did not submit to it, rejected the counsel of God against themselves, is a fact attested by divine authority; Luke 7:30.

THE MESSAGE OF BAPTISM STILL THE SAME

This baptism is the same now that it was eighteen hundred years ago; and the counsel of God in relation to it, hath not been changed; and the Pharisees and lawyers, or teachers and doctors of divinity, in our day, do, by their opposition to this baptism, as absolutely reject, the counsel of God against themselves, as did the same kind of opposers in the days of Christ and his apostles.

These things I showed and testified unto my people, and to all who came to see and hear the strange things which were passing among us. I testified and showed that believers were to be baptized, and that baptism was a burying, a planting, or immersing the believer in water, in the name of the "Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, because I found it thus showed in the sacred scriptures.

DANIEL MERRILL'S DISTINCTIVE BAPTIST PREACHING
NO BAPTISM FOR THE UNCONVERTED

I also testified and showed that unbelievers, whether infants or adults, had no claim to be baptized, for this plain reason, God had given them none. I further testified and showed that pouring and sprinkling, for baptism, were of men, and not of God, and gave this for evidence, that men had introduced and practiced them, while God had commanded no such thing.

MORE RESULTS OF DANIEL MERRILL'S PREACHING
MANY CONGREGATIONALISTS BECOME BAPTISTS AS THEY ARE CONVINCED OF
THE TRUTH

While these things were testified to the people in Sedgwick, and in this region, the Lord was pleased to open the hearts of many Congregationalists, and to turn them from their error, to the right ways of the Lord. For a considerable time, the word of the Lord prevailed greatly, and in many other towns, as well as in this, did the people believe the things of the kingdom of God, renounce their errors, and being baptized, were collected and regularly organized as constituent parts of this kingdom.

CONCLUSIONS

(1)

PEDOBAPTISTS ARE A CONFUSED MOVEMENT

Our brethren who have been decoyed into any of the hundreds of the warring and contending sections of the Pedobaptist church, may not take it kindly if we style it the confused church but we know not a more appropriate epithet, when applied to their church in its extension. We do not desire to use offensive words needlessly, but we wish to be understood distinctly.

(2)

ONLY TWO DENOMINATIONAL STRAINS
BAPTISTS VERSES PEDOBAPTISTS

What we wish to say, and what we wish to be understood to say, is that there are but two generic churches in the world. One is that church which avowedly and intentionally receives none into her community but saints, and does receive none but upon a profession of their being so, and are therefore called the "people of the saints of the Most High;" Dan. 7:27. The other church does avowedly and practically initiate into its community persons who have no claim to the style of saints, and who make no such pretensions. This we style the confused church. This distinction the world should understand, and specially the saints should understand it.

These things were distinctly testified unto the people in this region, when it pleased the Lord to open to me the things of his kingdom; and great fear came upon those who heard and saw the effects which this testimony produced. These effects are still visible and multiplied. More than four hundred baptized believers are now upon the ground which the Congregational church in this town covered in the year 1805.

GRATEFULNESS TO GOD FOR RELIGIOUS LIBERTY AND BIBLICAL TRUTH

Thus have I given a very concise account of the way in which the God of heaven hath led me, relative to the things of his kingdom. And to his mere mercy are we indebted for the civil and religious liberty which is now enjoyed by this favored nation; and to this am I specially indebted for preservation from violent death, and for liberty to relate to you these first principles of the kingdom of God.

For this kingdom should be our first petition, its prosperity the prime motive in every action, and for its advancement should we readily sacrifice present reputation, pleasure and profit. In full assurance that this kingdom is commenced, and will fill the whole earth,

I am, dear Sir, with esteem and affection,

Sincerely yours,

DANIEL MERRILL, Sedgwick, Maine, Nov. 22, 1832.