



Contributed to Maine Memory Network by the Maine Historical Society
Date:1819

Description: Ephraim Stinchfield, a Free Baptist preacher from Gray-New Gloucester, wrote a description of opponents of the Free Baptists, specifically Jacob Cochran and his followers, known as Cochranites, who were active in York and Cumberland counties.

of
A description ^ & Specific for a Religious
& ing
Hydrophobia which has Spread ^ is still Spread-
ing in a number of Towns in the County of
York & Cumberland district of Maine
By a Watchman
For this hath the Lord Said unto Me go Set
Isaiah.
a Watchman let him declare what he Seeth ^

While passing thro. the Town of Scarborough in the
month of February 1817 I called at a private House
of my acquaintane for refreshment. Who: Soon inf
ormed me of a stranger Who had latly moved
into the neighborhood by the Name of Jacob Cochran
Who called himself a Preacher that he had latly
moved his Family into the place from Conway in
Society
N.H. That he belonged to no religious ^ That he
was ordained by private Bretheren That he made
uncommon high pretentions of a Miraculous power
equal if not Superior to the apostolic that the religio
people in that vicinity & many others in that vicinity
esteemed him very highly. having had an oppertunity
of travailing thro Several of the States & perhaps thro
every County & most of the Towns in the district

a
of Maine & made many observations on Qu^ckery
of various kinds particularly religious deception, the
report I recieved from this family Sounded like an
imposter or Religious jugler. Expecting to make but
a Short Stay with this apparently pious family
I endeavored to give them the most prominent
features of an impostor as laid down in the
Bible & from my own observation. was then about
to take my leave of them When they informed
singular
this Same great^ Man was expeted to preach at
that evening

the House I then was ., They urged me hard to
Stay & hear him. I consented at length to Stay
When the evening came the people assemble. He asked
me to preach. I declined alledging I came to hear.

I heard him thro as well as those who Sanction
him by Amens & Shouts tho Nothing indecorous was
to be Seen I gave the people a short exhortation
much to his Mortification but he kept his resent
ment to himself until after I had left the place
The Meeting closed & I still retained my Suspicion
he was an impostor left my advice with the Fan-
cily not to take him into too near a connexion
until they were better acquainted which advice
they took kind & never forgot. I heard no more
from him until the Summer of 1817 when a report
was in circulation of some large numbers some said
more than a 1000 under his ministry. I was being
thro Kennebunk in the winter of 1818 it was told
me by an acquaintance that the reformation under
Jacob Cochran was Marvelous such as was never
known in those parts before. He said only by
his laying his Hand on a persons head he would
immediately fall to the floor & cry out in great
distress & would continue in that for a short time
& then be delivered from their distress & shout Glo-
ry that a few evenings before he had laid his
Hand on 2 or 3 one evening & they were all converted before
the meeting. After giving me this information
he asked me if I ever saw him? & what I thot
of Him I answered his Questions very freely & plain-
ly he said he hoped I was mistaken or would be a
false prophet. Hearing of this new Sect in Portland
& being an eye witness to some of their movements
the irregularity & disorder in their public Meetings
The high pretensions & haughtiness of their public
speakers confirmed they were not the ministers of
Christ notwithstanding their good words & fair Speeches.
Their riotous assemblies made such disturbance in Portland
two of their public Speakers was taken up & committed
to the common jail as disturbers of the peace they
were kept about 14 Days they appeared sensible
in some good degree of the impropriety of their
proceeding & dismissed from their confinement
one of them appeared to be in a good measure

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One of them appeared to be in a good measure

cured of this Religious Hydrophobia & appears
to be persuading others to apply to the great
physician for a speedy cure. The other returned to
his own company & is with them still so that it is
evident the prison is not a certain cure.

The latter part of Feb. last I was in
formed that Jacob Cochran had been examined
before a Court in the town of Saco for certain
crimes & misdemeanors upon several complaints preferd
against him that the Testimonies of the witnesses were
Such that the Court had laid him under Bonds on one
complaint for the Sum of 800 & another for 1000 Dollars
for his appearance at the Supreme Court to be holden
in the county of York in May next. After this
information I was passing thro & hearing of a meet
ing of this Society that I would once more go & hear
for myself. on entering the house where the meeting
was held I found the people principally standing on
their feet the room not being provided with seats
I however found a seat & set down to watch their
motions they soon struck a lively tune & sung it in
while others fell to dancing & jumbling while they
shouted amen or glory to God & glory to Jesus the
jumbling dancing singing & shouting however it was
to them was an awful jargon to me after this
exercise had lasted until they were almost out of
breath they would rest a few minutes & then renew
the same exercise with more vehemence than ever
& then at the close of every singing & dancing
exercise they would set up a general shout which
I doubt not may be heard miles. after
their meeting was over I retired & spent the rest
of the evening with six of this Society one of
which called himself an ordained Minister in their
Society. I had now for the first time an opportunity
to examine into their distinguishing peculiar Tenets
They like all other enthusiasts pretended to Superior
light than any other religious Society since the Apostles
Healing the Sick raising the dead & casting out
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Devils had been they said literally performed among them, Extraordinary Dreams & visions & Wonders had been wrought among them they Had private meetings Sometimes dark meetings in which none but what was bound by Oath to the most inviolable ~~secret~~ not to divulge what was transacted in the meeting upon penalty of eternal Damnation or having their name Blotted out of the book of Life. That each Brother & Sister in this fraternity has his Spiritual Wife, Mate or yokefellow Such as they choose or their leader for them these Spiritual Mates ~~might~~ upset all their former Marriages & many of them without distinction be bound together to the exclusion of all former Vows & promises in their Marriage such Conduct as this had not become general to many of them would deny that such things were among them when proved to them by the most solemn depositions of persons of undoubted veracity.

I had before I left this place such a discovery of the Mystery of Iniquity Working to the subversion of all Social ties betwixt Husband & wife, Parents & Children Rulers & Subjects Ministers & People The rising generation corrupted by the introduction of such vicious practices under a cloak of Religion that it seemed as tho' I should be constrained to run from House to House & cry Day & night against the abomination that maketh Desolate.

When I arrived at the upper towns in this County I found the dreadful Hydraphobia spreading with all its dreadful effects Children denouncing their Horrid imprecations against Members of Churches against their Pastors Neighbors one against another those who joined to be members of this brother hood must renounce every Natural connection & be wholly under the control of these Enthusastic Leaders be of whom a man is overcome of the same is he brot into Bondage. And

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As every Christian ought to be, Christ had said
to his apostles.
^ What I Say unto you I Say unto all Watch. This
made all his followers Watchmen. As a Watchman
I wished
^ to have the privilege to declare what I Saw in
that house if there was liberty or in any other place
in the Neighborhood where there was liberty The pretended
Minister asked me if I was called of God. ^{I think So} Have
you a particular message to this people? I have.
He replied go on. I Stated to them it is likely
it will take up an Hour, ^{or more} ~~to~~ ~~state~~ ~~to~~
declare what I See. Can I have So much time
without interruption. This could not be granted
by the minister nor owner of the House. A Brother
in the Meeting Said his house was free. I then
appointed a meeting at two ^{o'clock} & withdrew. Cochran
appointed one at 3 ^{o'clock} & drew off the great
part of his Society with him. The rest heard with
I thought
candor & ^ believed the report. After attending five
More Meetings round among them in different places
& hearing of another Considerable Society in the Town
of Arundel on the west Side of Saco River We went
to visit them we called at a private House in the nei-
ghorhood of the Society enquired ^ the leading or most
intelligent Men in the Society wishing if we convinced
any of the deception it might be Such Men as would
be useful in convincing their neighbors. having got
the necessary information I went to the House of
^ one of the ^{as soon as I entered the room} the Landlady his
Wife met me ^ & wished to know whether I had the
courage to kiss her. I declined ^ her ^ compliment
& took a Seat for which She called me a coward
I Soon began to introduce my business & laid open
to them ^{of the same order} his neighbors who Soon gathered ^ what I
had discovered among them which was passing for
Religion but before I got more than half thro he
interrupted me & wanted to hear no more. & as I
did not wish , to be rude in his house we waived
the conversation for that evening & I tarried with him
that Night. being invited to Breakfast by one of

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his Neighbors the Evening before ^{the evening} He went ^{to the} ~~House~~
as soon as we were seated, I told him that
I considered myself on equal ground with Him
being in another Mans House & wished him to know
me. He consented. I proceeded you doted much on
your honesty last evening but I tell you I believe
you to be a deceitful dishonest man. I understand
you have been a traveller & propagator of Cochrans
Sentiments, if So, you know what I told you was true
& you charged me in your House before your fam-
ily & neighbours with retailing ^{lies} I then made a fair
Statement of ^{Cochrans} conduct & he denied it again & again
& left me & went to his own House. I took breakfast
where I was, & soon followed him Home & asked
leave to clear my mind in his family, which was
large & appeared to be deeply affected with the
Religious Hydrophobia & expected to have to feel
some of the effects of the Hellish effluvia if
I cleared my mind. He consented I should do my
Duty I then began when I left it the other evening
& opened as plain as I could the whole mystery
of Iniquity the effect was fearful on him & his
Family. He looked more like a demon than a dis-
ciple of Christ his two arms ^{were} stretched to-
wards ~~my~~ face with two large fists clenched
Loud vociferations of Lie & Lyar came from
different parts of the room from the mouths of
his unmanly children & when he cried to his
God for a sword with his ^{So} near my face his
wife shouted a loud Amen. After the Husband
wife & children had vented ^{my} spleen in as full
a manner as they dared I ~~asked~~
asked them to look over with candor the treatment
they had given me, whether it looked like
Christian treatment. promised ^{the} better treat-
if they would make me a visit. Told Him
I came from pure motives to visit ^{the} way ^{the}

In the Morning to the
his Neighbors the Evening before ^ He went [crossed out]^ House
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I came from pure motives to visit [crossed out]^ warn them

The danger that awaits them, they would one day
find out the truth of what I told them & then
they would be sorry for the abuse they had given
me. I invited the man to ride abroad with me
& visit some of his brethren He consented Called
to his horse & spent that day & evening with us
in a public meeting, was a man of a good
character & he was a good man of a good
kind my treatment by this man & his family
who would I doubt, in any other case treated
me kindly caused me to cry out with tears. After
I was gone from the House in the language of
the prophet Jeremiah Woe is my Mother That Thou
hast borne me a Man of Strife & a Man of
War to the work of the Spirit & a Man of
War as above Stated may look mysterious I account for it this
way when they acted themselves as rational Men & Women they
were kind & hospitable but when under the operation of the
[?] unreasonable
I returned again to Buxton because by phrasing I turned
I that I could discover a greater & Greater Abomination
He pretended to understand Masonry & to Some peculiar
favorites would reveal the Secret That what it was
I was not informed one of the pretended Signs of this
kind was the male & female putting their thumbs &
fore fingers together in form of a triangle and
kissing thro [?] two young men informed
they Saw Cochran Take a young woman into a dark
private room & Stay a considerable time & then come out
of the room & ask her if She did not See things
different from what She did before Asked her if the
fire did not look different? She asked him He wished
her to Say So? He Said to increase the faith of the
others She at length after much urging Said the
fire looked different. He then took another Female
into the Same room in the Same Manner & then
another. He then told the remainder of Society
they must not be tryed with him for those who
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in a public Meeting ^ [crossed out]
children- [rest of line crossed out]
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& Those who were tryed must never tell of it.
Another young man in presence of Judge Woodman of
Buxton & myself & several others declared that when he was
admitted ^{into} of Cochran's Fraternity, had to hold a bible
in his hand while Cochran administered a solemn Oath
of what was called: in the context of which was that
if ever divulged what took place in their private
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of Life & he suffer eternal Damnation. He then pointed to ^{name}
his spiritual wife & he was willing they should lodge
together which he did a number of Nights though he
declared himself innocent of any sinful conduct he testified
that Jacob Cochran lodged two nights to his certain know
while he was there, with a woman not his ^{wife} five couples
more lodged in the Same ^{house} chamber not husband & wife
one of which had a wife at home at her fathers ^{house}
at the same time he tarried at this house of ill fame four
Nights & came away innocent took another young Man
They both
& went back to Cochran ^{rest} asked for their dismissal
which was granted Cochran told the man who
went with him that he would keep his Secret but
for Him God almighty would never let him ^{atone}
until He had Brot him out. This proved
true for he found no peace in his mind until he
had violated his pretended Oath & publicly and
heartily confessed his wrong & brot out the bad
conduct he knew. I have had the priveledge of
reading the depositions taken at his examinations in
Saco I candidly acknowledge to the public they are
too bad for me to lay before the public I Shall
leave them ^{to those who} may wish to know the want of [?]]
[?]] to God hear his tryal or wait until this
[?]] the public be with
[?]] They are So
obscene disgusting & Scandalous I cannot, I I will not
prostitute my pen to write it nor the Eyes & ears
of the public to read and hear it. but having in
Some measure discharged my duty in a religious
point of view, leave him in the hand of the
Magistrates & let them publish their own documents.
My
Having gone thro with [?] description of this Fell
to
disorder must proceed ^{to} point out a Remedy for
the disease God has in Mercy to us given
in this disordered world provided a Specific

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For every disorder of Body & mind, when our bodies
are disordered we apply to the most Skillful Physician
Eternal Wisdom has provided a remedy for all the diseases
of the mind. The great Specific for these disorders is called
The Plant of Renown Ezch 34-29 [?] of Jesse [?] 11- [?] Tree
of Life Rev. 2-7 & The Word of God points out these various
disorders & plainly points out a Sufficient Remedy for them
The Great Physician Say, Look unto me & be ye Saved
Prayer appears to be basely neglected among this Society
In all their meetings I have attended I have not heard
one petition to God neither from Ministers nor People
I would advise those who have been bitten by this
religious Miniac to consider that the religion of Jesus
is rational & adressed to our reason The Doctrine of Christ
& his appostles is reasonable it points us to repent of our
Sins & take Christ for our leader whom we are to hear
in all things. Your Base leader has told you that hi
mself is that Prophet that Moses & the appostles Said
was to be heard in all things. This makes him a false
apostle. Strive to come to a Serious consideration. Thus
Saith Lord consider your way, See the abomination
depicted in this pamphlet which you will be led
in if you do not Stop & think. I know these awful
crimes above described are hidden from many of you
but they are among you. Let me therefore say to
you in the language of inspiration "Come ye out
from among them & be ye Seperate & touch not the
unclean Thing & I will recieve you & you may find
the charaters of your leaders- plainly described by Peter
2 epistle & chapter & by the apostle Jude which chapters
I advise you to read & weigh the contents in your
mind candidly. Admit nothing for religion which
will not compare with Gods holy Word & Spirit.
Let the example of Elder John Boothby, who has
now Preaching against Such wicked conduct [page torn]
others to repent & turn to the Lord. [page torn]
with a Short adress to the author of [page torn]

for every disorder of Body & mind. When our bodies
are disordered we apply to the most Skillful Physician
Eternal Wisdom has provided a remedy for all the diseases
disorders is

of the Mind. The great Specific for these ^ Sometimes ^ called
The Plant of Renown Ezch 34-29 [?] of Jesse [?] 11- [?] Tree
of Life Rev. 2-7 & The Word of God points out these various
disorders & plainly points out a Sufficient Remedy for them
The Great Physician Say, Look unto me & be ye Saved
Prayer appears to be basely neglected among this Society
In all their meetings I have attended I have not heard
one petition to God neither from Ministers nor People
I would advise those who have been bitten by by this
religious Miniac to consider that the religion of Jesus
is rational & adressed to our reason The Doctrine of Christ
& his appostles is reasonable it points us to repent of our
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& others

Let the example of Elder John Boothby ^ who [page torn]
[page torn] in your Society excite your imitation [page torn]
[page torn] Saw where this imposter was about to lead [page torn]
[page torn] renounced further communication with [page torn]
[page torn] now Preaching against Such wicked conduct [page torn]
[page torn] others to repent & turn to the Lord. [page torn]
[page torn] with a Short adress to the author of [page torn]

Deluded Man

While I was in the Town Saco I found a Scur
 rilous production bearing your signature addressed to me
 in the form of an[^] Letter [crossed out], lodged in the house
 of an acquaintance in which the Terms impudent Scoundrel
 Servant of the Devil & pluto Fornicator Lyar & Excomuni
 cated person, are ascribed to me I did ^{not} expect any
 thing Better than Such names from you & your adherents
 while exposing your wickedness & Should have passed it
 by in silent content had it not been that you ^{had} nearly
 200 ⁱⁿ different towns in this district now under your
 control Who believe every [^] [crossed out] Say & do is right [crossed out]
 There are the Scattered remains of the more than 2000
 of
 you So latly boasted[^] & I think the more the pity you
 have any. But I will inform them that I was [?]
 in Society
 [blotted out] incorporated[^] Religious [^] in June 1790 the records
 of our General Court [blotted out] will prove this. was admitted
 a member of the religious to[?]
 of the Church of the Same[^] [crossed out]
 will prove this the ch records in N.G.
 to which I now belong[^] in Nov[^] 1792 My certificate
 of ordination Signed by Minister of respectability will
 prove that I was ordained in Nov 1792 Since
 I have Sufficient documents to
 which[^] time will prove that I have baptised 1068
 the last of them in the winter [past] Clerks
 persons [Since that[^] time the certificates [^] of the two
 Men of respectability belonging to the Church
 & Society I
[^] to, which I now belong will prove that [^] Now
 as a regular ordained Minister
 am in Standing with them [^] & have been from the
 the time of incorporation to the present time
 Your Base insinuations in your Letter to the contrary
 Notwithstanding Ephraim Stinchfield

Newgloucester April 1819

Deluded Man

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