

Samuel Trott

{1784 to 1866}

Samuel Trott was one of the leading Baptist frontier ministers; a firm Predestinarian, an Exalter of Christ Alone, and one who contended in earnest for that "faith once delivered unto the saints." Along with Gilbert Beebe, he was one the most influential of that group of Particular Baptists which came to be known as "Old School." Born in Walpole, New Hampshire, he first joined a Presbyterian Church and in his own words, became a "pretty strict formalist" and a "legalist." In time he was brought {under the teaching of the Spirit} to a gospel perception of the finished work of Christ, and sought out those of like-minded faith, and was consequently baptized by Elder Parkinson of New York, on December 22nd., 1810. In 1816, we find him in Ohio where he taught school and preached. In 1820, he travelled as far west as the Licking Particular Baptist Association, where, after preaching in the home of Elder Ambrose Dudley, he baptized his son, Thomas P. Dudley. Still later, we find him in Virginia, where he served Frying Pan Baptist Church at the Fairfax County Court House. He was a contemporary of Elder Gilbert Beebe and a frequent contributor to the "Signs of the Times." He also was an author of the Black Rock Address; {which was a manifesto of a meeting that took place in Black Rock, Maryland in May, 1832,} consisting of resolutions against "uniting with worldly societies," and a declaration of non-fellowship with those who had done so. By "worldly societies" were meant Missionary, Sabbath-school, Bible, Tract, and Temperance Societies, &c., against which the brethren of the Black Rock Meeting protested, as being at that time practiced among the portion of the Baptist denomination which at that time were known as Fullerites.

Hassell in his Church History, notes the following: "Numerous Scriptures forbid the intimate association of God's people with the heathen or unbelievers {Ex.34:11-16; Deut.7:1-11; 22:9-11; Ezra 9; Neh.13:1-3, 23-31; Ps.26:4, 5; 44:20, 21; 106:35-48; 1 Cor.15:33; James 4:4; Jn.15:18, 19,} for the expressed reason that such associations are invariably corrupting to the people of God. Especially corrupting must be such alliances as are based upon money, which is represented in the Scriptures as the god of this world, and the love of which is a root of all evil {Matthew. 6:24; Luke

16:13; 1 Tim. 6:10.} From such money based societies let it be deeply impressed upon our minds that Peter, who had no silver or gold, and Paul, who had to work day and night for his daily bread, and even the Lord Jesus Christ, who had not where to lay His head, would have been debarred, unless some friend had paid their fee or a miracle had been wrought for that purpose. Can it be possible that such Egyptian or worldly alliances of the children of God, so repeatedly and pointedly forbidden in both the Old and the New Testament of Scriptures, are of the Lord and will be blessed of Him? Besides corrupting the people of God, these alliances demonstrate confidence in the flesh and a lack of faith in God; that is, a departure and alienation from God, and, to the extent they reach, and identification with unbelievers. God solemnly calls upon all His dear children who have been ensnared and carried down into Babylon— “Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues” {Rev.18:4.} Babylon was an idolatrous nation; and it is demonstrably certain that, if human language means anything, the language employed by a large number of high officials in these modern religious confederacies represents these human means and methods as the most important and indispensable requisite for the conversion and salvation of the world; that is, they represent these human institutions as gods, and thus, confederating with Babylon, professed Christians have become idolatrous too, just as the Scriptures abundantly warn us. Christ and His Apostles, let it be indelibly impressed upon our minds and hearts, instituted absolutely none of these forbidden, unhallowed and contaminating, idolatrous and ruinous Egyptian and Babylonian confederacies.” {Hassell: Church History, 1886}

In reference to the BLACK ROCK ADDRESS itself, Hassell writes: “When the Fullerite heresies had been introduced among the Baptists, and produced great discord and turmoil, some of the old veterans of the cross met at Black Rock, Maryland, in 1832, and published a solemn protest against all the newly introduced innovations upon our former faith and order, and made the rejection of the new departure a test of fellowship. To distinguish those who retained the apostolic doctrine from those who departed from it, we consented to be known by a name which had been given us by our opponents, viz., Old School Baptists.” {Hassell: Church History, 1886}

In 1832 Elder Samuel Trott became Pastor at Welsh Tract, and in his corresponding letter he says: “We receive Christ as our pattern, hence we do not walk in the observance of many things which have been introduced

among the Baptists generally, and received as great importance in advancing the cause of religion, &c. We desire to keep in His footsteps, believing it to be the safest path. We rely on His wisdom and power to gather in His elect and extend the knowledge of His salvation.”

We insert the following information from Hassell’s Church History regarding this assembly of believers. “The WELSH TRACT CHURCH, whose meeting-house is two miles from Newark, in New Castle County, Delaware, is the oldest Old School Baptist Church in the United States, and the only American Baptist Church that was regularly organized in Europe before emigrating to this country. It was constituted, in the spring of 1701, by sixteen Baptists in the counties of Pembroke and Caermarthen, in South Wales, with Thomas Griffith, one of their number, as their pastor. A “Church Emigrant,” they embarked at Milford Haven in June, 1701, and landed at Philadelphia September 8th, 1701. They first settled about Pennypack, near Philadelphia, where they continued about a year and a half, and where their membership increased to thirty-seven. Then they procured land in Northern Delaware from Messrs. Evans, Davis and Willis, who had purchased upwards of 30,000 acres of William Penn, called the “Welsh Tract,” and in 1703 they removed to that location, and built, near Iron Hill, a small meeting-house, which stood until 1746, and was then succeeded by the present substantial stone house of worship. In the yard around the house rest the bodies of many of the pastors and members who, during almost two centuries, have met and joined here in the service of God. The Welsh Tract Church was one of the five original churches that, in 1707, formed the Philadelphia Baptist Association (the oldest Baptist Association in America), and for many years it was the most influential member of that body. The Philadelphia Confession of Faith, published by this Association in 1742, was the old London Confession of 1689, with two other Articles, added principally through the influence of the Welsh Tract Church—Article 23, Of Singing of Psalms (in Public Worship), and Article 31, Of Laying on of Hands (on all Baptized Believers). Until 1732 the Church Book was kept in the Welsh language; and for about seventy years the pastors were of Welsh extraction. The pastors of Welsh Tract Church have been as follows; Thomas Griffith, Elisha Thomas, Enoch Morgan, Owen Thomas, David Davis, John Sutton, John Boggs, Gideon Farrell, Stephen M. Woolford, Samuel Trott, William K. Robinson, Thomas Barton (from 1839 to 1870, when he died, after having been sixty years in the ministry), G. W. Staton, William Grafton and Joseph L. Staton,

the present pastor. The church owns a residence and tract of land, which the pastor occupies." {Hassell: Church History, 1886}

Strange, and truly contemptible is the fact that in this definitive History of the Old School/Primitive Baptists written by one of their own {Hassell: History of the Church of God, 1886} no mention {apart from his name, in conjunction with Associational Meetings, and churches for which he preached} is made of Elder Trott. One cannot but conjecture that perhaps his name was entirely blotted out by Sylvester Hassell, who revised the work prior to its first publication, after the death of his father Cushing Hassell {died 1880} to whom the book, for the most part, is attributed. The younger Hassell compromised some of the leading principles which distinguished the earlier Baptists, principles which Trott warmly advocated, and for which he was despised & hated.

Samuel Trott's own personal testimony of God's Grace in Christ was published in the Old School Baptist periodical the SIGNS OF THE TIMES, in 1851; from which we extract the following:

Childhood: I was born in Walpole, New Hampshire, was one of three children my mother had. My sister died before my mother and my brother was burned up with the house in which he lived a year or two after, and my mother died when I was eight years old. My father who had been for several years riding as sheriff, and had thereby become involved, was about this time broken up as to property, and shortly after broke up housekeeping. From that early period in life, though my father lived several years after, I never knew the comforts of a parent's home, nor the solace of a brother or a sisters society. I had no near relatives on my father's side, and none that I knew; on my mother's side I had several, but circumstances around the above time caused me to become estranged from them. My father procured a kind and comfortable home for me, where I enjoyed all the advantages of a common school education, usual for boys in New England to have. I continued in this family until I was nearly fifteen, when I went as an apprentice to a trade.

First Impressions & Presbyterianism: From my first religious exercise, I thought it important, I should, on the first opportunity join some church, as a part of my religious service to God, and as calculated more to establish me in my resolution to seek God. When I became located in Cooperstown I thought this opportunity was afforded me. There was however one difficulty

in the way: the Presbyterians I had understood professed to believe in the doctrine of election, that I could not profess, my heart was bitter against it, so much so that as I was one night in my room reading the 8th and 9th chapter of Romans, I was so incensed against those chapters because of their containing so fully the doctrine of election and predestination, that I actually thought of cutting them out of my Bible and casting them into the fire. Nothing but a sense of its being God's Word prevented me. This difficulty however was soon removed, for shortly after, some persons were received into the church, and I had an opportunity of hearing the church covenant to which they were to assent, read, and found to my joy that election and predestination were not named therein. The next month I applied to the session, and was received into the church. In the spring a young Presbyterian came to study with Mr. Neal with a view to the ministry, who was better indoctrinated in the Presbyterian faith than I was. As he boarded and roomed with me he soon found out my opposition to election, and set about reforming me from my error. By his reasoning from the Scriptures, and by reading certain writers on the subject to which he referred me, I was convinced that election was a Scriptural doctrine, and became a strenuous advocate for it, that is as held generally by the Presbyterians in connection with general atonement, general offers, invitations &c. Having joined the Presbyterian church in March, I think, 1808, I was strict in observing the Sabbath, as I considered it, in reading a certain portion of Scripture daily, in prayer and in morality, was during that year a pretty strict formalist, and got along comfortably. Not that I thought I had attained a safe state, this was what I was labouring for, and I hoped that God had begun the work in me, and therefore that I should be able to persevere and attain to a safe state before I died. This as high as I can recollect was about my views. I from this time became about as laborious a legalist as was to be found among the Presbyterians.

Instructions in Grace: In looking at some of the entries in my diary during this Summer, I should think that they had been penned by a tempted, doubting believer, were it not for the legality so apparent in them. I speak in them about my inability to do anything, that God must do all for me by His grace, and of my entire dependence on Christ for acceptance, &c., and yet there is a rotten legal self doing spirit running through the whole. My reading was of the more evangelical class of authors, as they are called, such as John Newton, and even Dr. Hawker's "Zion's Pilgrim" was a favorite book with me. I no doubt imbibed their mode of expression. I mention these

things, to show how the natural mind may be molded into a gospel mode of thinking and expression, whilst we are ignorant of our helplessness, though I was being taught to feel the power of my corruptions, though ignorant of Christ.

Conversion: {His conversion experience as related by himself was as follows:} Immediately upon this, {under great conviction of sin,} as I was there on my knees, the account of Abraham's offering his son Isaac as in Gen.22 was brought to my view. Isaac as bound and laid upon the altar, appeared as representing the case of the heirs of promise, and as fully representing my then case, as bound by the law and doomed by its condemnatory sentence to death; as Abraham knew nothing but to inflict the death blow, so the law knew nothing but to inflict the curse upon the sinner. My attention was then turned to Abraham's arm, being arrested by the angel's call to him, and the ram caught in the thicket by his horns being taken by him and sacrificed in the place of Isaac. This ram appeared to represent Christ as involved in the demands of the law, in the power of His Godhead, by virtue of His headship and union with His people, and therefore as made to suffer the penalty of the law in their stead. My views then were not as distinct on all these points as I have here {in The Signs} given them; but the substitution of Christ in the place of the condemned sinner was fully presented to view. And the atonement of Christ appeared so full and so exactly adapted to my helpless, guilty and condemned case, that surely, I said to myself, as I viewed it, God must have had me in view when He made this rich provision in His Son. I was therefore enabled confidently to rely on His atonement for pardon, and to plead it for my acceptance with God, and the sense of condemnation was gone...self was in a great measure lost sight of, and God in His glorious character and sovereignty occupied my view...I had never before felt such meltings of heart on account of sin, nor saw sin to be so vile as now; - not as contrasted with the demands of the law, but as contrasted with the goodness and mercy of God.

Confirmation: {He goes on to relate some consolation received by the writings of William Huntington} As I went out of the study door, the thought occurred to me that I would go into my lodging room, and pray to the Lord to go with me and direct me. Whilst there thus engaged, my mind became somewhat composed, and the idea was suggested to me, that I had better go back into the study, and read a certain pamphlet which had been laid on Elder P's table a few days before. I went back and took up the book; which

was the experience of a person in England written by himself in a letter to William Huntington, and was by him thus published. As I read it, I saw the path in which the Lord had led me delineated step by step. Like myself this man had been a professor for some years previous to his being brought into gospel liberty, had been a zealous legalist; had had his foundation suddenly all knocked from under him, as mine was, and afterwards, Christ had been revealed to him as the substitute of the sinner, and the end of the law for righteousness. As he described these exercises as a being killed by the law, and a being born again, born into gospel liberty, I was led to understand such to have been the nature of the exercises I passed through during the months of Sept. & Oct. 1810, as before described, that then it was, I was slain by the law, and then that I became a believer in Christ, and was born of God. The cloud that I had been so long under now in some measure broke; and I enjoyed a comfortable hope of being a new creature. From this I was led on to see what a galling yoke of bondage, the law and legal religion was; and how lovely and glorious was gospel liberty and gospel grace as contrasted with legal service.

Call to the Ministry & Further Establishment in the Truth: Soon after my mind received satisfaction in reference to the ministry. I returned to the vicinity of Morristown, with the expectation of preaching for that church. But I went not with my mind impressed with a desire to convert souls. I went deeply impressed with the evil of that legal bondage which I knew by past experience was so prevalent in that region among the Presbyterians and others. I went therefore with the design of bearing my testimony against it, and to hold forth salvation as being of rich, free and sovereign grace reigning through the righteousness of Christ. I soon by that kind of preaching aroused a pretty severe opposition against me, both in and out of the church; I was charged freely with being an Antinomian, with bringing forward new things, and with creating divisions, &c. This drove me to search the Scriptures and to enquire more earnestly at the mouth of the Lord, and resulted in my becoming stronger in my views and in the defense of them. From that day to this, the most aid I have received from man in forming my religious views, has been through their opposition; thereby driving me from men to look to God and the Scriptures for my guidance. I have learned in my early experience, many ideas from men, but have had again in many instances to unlearn them. I know that it has been my desire to learn of God and not of man, and He I think taught me that desire, in my early

experience. Notwithstanding the opposition raised against my preaching at Morristown, the church in the course of the summer called me to ordination. And I was ordained August 30, 1812, not as the pastor of that church, for that I declined, finding no Scriptural authority for it, but to the gospel ministry. {Signs of the Times 1851}

From the Signs by Gilbert Beebe

ELDER SAMUEL TROTT - DIED AT AGE 83. Elder Samuel Trott has laid off his armor, received his passport, and gone, as we fully believe, to the bosom of his God and Savior. For several months his strength has been gradually declining; so much so as to prevent him from visiting the churches, as he has been confined to his house or immediate neighborhood ever since last May. At that time we met him at the Baltimore Association, where we heard him for the last time, preach a short but very impressive sermon from John 3:3, "Jesus answered and said unto him, Verily, verily, I say unto thee, Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God." His voice was feeble, and his physical power scarcely sufficient to support his debilitated frame. He remarked that that was in all probability the last time he should ever attempt to preach to us. But the ardor of his spirit arose to an irrepressible earnestness, in solemnly impressing upon the brethren the important doctrine of his text, that whatever amount of human wisdom, literary acquirements, or human talent a man may possess, or however sound in theory, none are competent to preach the gospel of Christ, who have not seen the kingdom; and none can possibly see that kingdom who are not born of the Spirit. His last solemn admonition to the saints on this important subject fell upon our ears, and sank deep in our hearts, as our dear aged father was summing up in a few words what had been the burden of his ministry for more than sixty years. His stand point, bordering on the verge of the eternal world, with the eye of faith uplifted to the glory of the upper skies, and wings expanded for his rapturous flight from earth, only waiting to pronounce the finishing sentences of the ministry which he had received of the Lord, to testify the gospel of the grace of God. If we mistake not that was the last time he in a formal manner attempted to preach. But as long as he continued in the flesh, he ceased not, as opportunity presented and his receding strength would allow, to speak of his Redeemer's kingdom, and to talk of his power. We called on and spent a night with our dear brother in August last, in company of Elders Leachman and Durand, after the

close of the Corresponding Meeting in Loudoun County, Va. In our last interview, as far as strength would permit, he reaffirmed the position he had so long held, and the testimony he had so long and faithfully born to the truth of prophecy, and of what he had understood to be its import. To us, his clear and lucid interpretation of those prophecies concerning the twelve hundred and sixty days of the papal beast, and the corresponding time of the two witnesses prophesying in sackcloth, was wonderful. And that he should have published his views nearly forty years ago, and that he lived to see that his views were correct, in the literal humiliation of the pope, and extinction of his temporal, or secular power, just twelve hundred and sixty years after the inauguration of that power in the year 606, is evidence that he was endowed with more light upon these subjects than had ordinarily been enjoyed by his contemporaries. We have been personally acquainted with our dear departed brother about 45 years, and from our earliest acquaintance, have looked up to him as to a father, for counsel, and instruction, which he has been enabled to give. We have always found him ready to speak a seasonable word to us when occasion has required. Like David and Jonathan, we have loved each other; facing the same foes, bearing the same testimony, engaged in the same conflicts and participating in the same victories, suffering the same reproaches, encountering the same persecutions for the truth's sake. Is it strange, now that he is taken from us, that we should exclaim, as did Elisha, when he saw Elijah taken up to heaven in the fiery chariot? "My father! My father! the chariot of Israel, and the horseman thereof." More than an ordinary tribute to the memory of this dear servant of God is due from us, and a very large space in our columns should be devoted to a becoming notice of his departure. No other correspondent has contributed so liberally to our columns from the first number of our first volume, until prevented from writing, first by the late war, and since the war, for debility. Indeed it is doubtful if we could have succeeded in sustaining our publication had he withheld his support; and now that his pen shall no longer write for our edification, it is meet that we should record how greatly we have been aided by him, and how sadly the announcement of his departure has fallen on us. Brother Trott leaves a widow and one daughter, and has one surviving son residing in Texas. His first wife and all his children, except the one son and one daughter, had been called away before him. With our dear bereaved sister Trott, and the surviving daughter, who were with him to the last, we most sincerely sympathize in this, their deep affliction, and may their sore bereavement be

sanctified to their good, and may they, with the absent son, be divinely sustained by the strong arm of the Lord. To the churches of our order, especially those who have enjoyed the labors of the departed, we would speak words of consolation. It is the Lord, and he is able to comfort you, in this and in all your sorrows. Look up to him and pray him to send forth faithful laborers into his harvest. To the readers of the "Signs of the Times": we shall greatly miss that familiar signature and those deeply edifying epistles of love, which, for thirty-four years have afforded so much instruction and comfort. But our God hath raised up many other witnesses, and has assured us that he will not leave himself without witnesses. Long will you cherish the memory of our dear departed brother. To our brethren in the ministry: a valiant soldier has laid aside his armor; a veteran has received his passport to his mansion in the skies; our hearts are saddened, because the places that knew him once shall know him no more; but he is not dead, but sleepeth. His trials and conflicts are over, and all his tears are wiped forever away. A few more days of trial, temptation and conflict remains for us to fill up, and then, like him, shall we close our weary eyes on all the vanities of earth, and go to dwell forever with the Lord. {Signs of the Times 1866}

Elder Robert C. Leachman, referring to Elder Trott's ministry said that; "his ministry was not with him as; alas, it is with too many, a work of convenience or of secondary importance, but regarded as the great and leading business of his life. Through sunshine and storm he was faithful to his appointments, and seemed to be always laden with gospel treasures. No man seemed to feel more sensibly his dependence upon God, and none seemed to be more constantly furnished unto every good word and work. His preaching seemed to me like a voice from the grave, rebuking the foul spirit of fanaticism, and testifying that the boasted and boastful religion of the time amounts to nothing. His last moments were marked by no special demonstration. Yet his death was just such a one as I would wish to die; with no particular disease, his body not racked with pain, his mental powers in full exercise to the last expression he was able to give, he quietly fell asleep like an infant in its mother's arms."