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A GREAT MAN FALLEN.

A SERMON

PREACHED ON THE OCCASION OF THE DEATH OF THE REV. ORANGE SCOTT.

BY LUTHER LEE.

2 Sam. iii. 38. Know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen this day in Israel?

Man at his best estate is said to be "altogether vanity." He groweth up like a flower and fades as soon; in the morning he flourishes; at noon he is cut down; at evening we seek him and he is not! Life is short even when it is extended to its utmost limits; three score and ten years are soon accomplished, and when from that most distant point of observation we look back upon the distance over which we have journeyed, the whole is contracted into the narrowness of a span, and life looks like a gone by day or a faded hour.

Very few, however, fill up the full measure of life, and depart at the end of many years; many are cut off in the bud of existence; and many more in the strength of manhood, and from the heights of ambition and positions of the greatest usefulness, descend quickly into the silence and darkness of the grave. Nothing can exempt us from the shafts of death. Youth, beauty, manly strength, intellectual greatness, high rank, worldly honor and glory, all these combined are no security against the assaults of death, but only render us the more marked objects of his envenomed sting. The young and the old, the rich and the poor, the great and the small, must alike fall at the touch of death and mingle their dust together.

In the light of what has been said, it must be obvious that no man is positively great. Yet some men are comparatively great; when one man is compared with men in general, he may appear comparatively great. Such an one was Abner the son of Ner, captain general of Saul's army, over whose death David lamented, and said, "know ye not that there is a prince and a great man fallen this day in Israel!" These words are equally applicable to our fallen brother, whose funeral oration I have arisen to pronounce. In the

few remarks I have to offer, I shall attempt simply to exhibit

SOME OF THE MOST PROMINENT TRAITS IN HIS CHARACTER WHICH PROVE HIM TO HAVE BEEN A GREAT MAN.

1. ORANGE SCOTT was a self-made man: he had not a distinguished ancestry to give him rank. His parents were poor and not known out of their own neighborhood, though respectable, for poverty is no disgrace. He had not the advantages of a common school to improve his mind and devolve his powers. His childhood and early youth were spent in obscurity; schools never made him; he ascended not to distinction through college walks; what he was, was simple nature cultivated by her own hand, set at work and guided by the grace of God stirring and animating the heart.

The greatness of some men appears artificial, a made greatness by a process of forced culture; it was otherwise with his; it was a natural greatness; it was that greatness which cultivates itself, sets up its own way-marks, travels in its own strength, and shines in its own light. The minds of those who are artificially great may be compared to a feeble taper which has to be tenderly nurtured to preserve its flame, and is increased by the application of the fuel of scholastic lore, until it shines with an artificial light that is kindled around it. But the greatness of the subject of these remarks was more like the volcanic fires of the mountain that burn unaided and unseen, until by their own power they burst their rocky confines, shocking all around them, and streaming out their light athwart the startled gloom.

2. He was an able, successful, and popular minister of the Gospel. His conversion took place at a camp-meeting in Vermont, in the summer of 1820; it was clear and sound; from the very day of his conversion he began to study and improve his mind. His call to the ministry was marked and decisive, and his progress very rapid; he became very popular and successful: we may say his popularity was unequalled by any of his class. It may be said of him, that no charge which he served ever complained; all would have been glad to have retained him longer, or to have obtained him again. He who for more than twenty years fills his appointments so as not to be objected to by a single charge, among Methodist ministers, must be a great man.

He has, under God, been made the instrument of the conversion of hundreds of souls, many of whom got to heaven before him, and

if spirits recognise each other in the future world, they have doubtless before this beckoned him through heavens portals to their society and everlasting rest.

3. He was a man of the greatest possible degree of moral courage; he possessed a fearless, open-hearted, out-spoken honesty, that dared to do right in the face of opposition, alike regardless of incensed dignitaries frowning from their seats of power, or a corrupt populace hissing and howling around his feet. What he thought he said, and what he said he did; few men cared less for popular favor or clamor than did he. He liked to enjoy the good opinions of others, but it was only as a means, and he was sure not to retain the friendship of others longer than it could be done consistently with his views of right and duty.

We may find an illustration of what has been said above, in his espousal and advocacy of the cause of the oppressed. He was at the time flush with honors, at the height of his popularity, having everything to lose and nothing to gain. He was one of the first to open his mouth for the dumb in the M. E. Church, and he did it in defiance of the most determined opposition. At the general conference in Cincinnati in 1836, he stood up against the overwhelming numbers and voices of the whole conference, and did noble battle for the truth and the oppressed. It is true there were on a test question fourteen votes, thirteen voting with him, yet we believe he was the only speaker on the side of anti-slavery in that great body of two hundred members. And to his praise be it spoken now he is dead, he is the only man who has ever, to any extent, urged the inherent sinfulness of slavery on the floor of the General Conference of the M. E. Church. He maintained his anti-slavery views at all times and under all circumstances, fearlessly, and with a power that made him the particular object of attack by all the advocates of slavery, and all the haters and opposers of abolition. He was removed from the office of presiding elder by the bishop, because he would not promise to desist from the agitation of the slave question. He was several times put upon his trial before the conference, twice was he charged by the bishop himself, who came down from his episcopal seat and placed himself before the conference with all his talent and official influence as the accuser of Brother Scott. Men of less courage might have faltered under such circumstances, but he did not; he grappled in the seemingly unequal contest, and

turned aside the episcopal shafts that were designed to lay him low. He had to contend against the first order of talent, official dignity and great personal influence. It should be known that this bishop was at home in New England; it was his native conference; he grew up and became a father among them, was taken from among them to be made bishop, and had more influence in that conference than any other bishop ever had, and yet, Brother Scott comparatively a young man, proved himself more than his equal; he rolled back the episcopal storm and came unscathed from the thickest of the bishops' thunders.

It is, of course, claimed by all the opposers of Bro. Scott that he was wrong in the warfare he maintained with the bishop, but in this they do honor to his talent. If he could take the wrong side of a question, and prove himself more than a match for a bishop, where that bishop was best known, in the face of all New England, he must have been an extraordinary man.

4. He was no less remarkable for his perseverance than for his moral courage. I have known and observed the movements of many men, and have been long and intimately associated with Orange Scott, and never have I known a man of more unyielding purpose and undying perseverance, than he. Amid all the severe trials and dark hours we passed through together, I never once knew him discouraged. When he had formed his purpose, and laid his plan, he directed all his energies to its accomplishment, and in the effort he never tired, or wavered in his purpose so long as he believed the object right, and saw the least hope of its attainment. He could be defeated, but he could not be conquered.

An illustration of his perseverance is found in the manner in which he prosecuted the anti-slavery cause, and especially within the pale of the M. E. Church. He set out to purge the M. E. Church from slavery, and he pursued this object with an unwavering purpose so long as there was, in his opinion, the least hope of success. He was defeated but not subdued, he saw and felt his defeat, but it was only to rally and renew the conflict in another form. This defeat began to be felt in 1840, after the General Conference of that year; it was felt in the desertion of friends, who, worn out by the constant and severe war the authorities of the church waged upon the abolitionists, or having learned that anti-slavery was not the way to popular favor in the M. E. Church, went over to the other

side. His spirit was grieved, when he saw those who had stood by him through many conflicts, retiring from the field, or openly going over to the opposers of abolition, under the pretence of a more sober and rational view of anti-slavery. This state of things was more fully exhibited in the last trial of Mr. Sunderland, at the New England Conference of that year, and from the conclusion of that trial, I know our departed brother had but little sympathy in common with the M. E. Church. The next marked event was the difficulty which arose between the Bishop and the Lowell churches. The churches petitioned for particular preachers, and were refused. One of them, called St. Paul's Church, then requested the Bishop not to send them any preacher, but to return them on the minutes "to be supplied," as is often done, that they might secure the services of such a man as they desired. This the Bishop refused, and sent them a man they did not want. The people refused to receive the Bishop's preacher, and a severe controversy arose. The preacher had one majority in the board of Trustees, but an overwhelming majority of the society was against him. A legal meeting of the society was called and those trustees favorable to the preacher removed, and others put in their place, by which the preacher was prevented from getting possession of the pulpit. To do this, it was necessary that the society should elect a pastor, the act of incorporation giving the right of nomination to the pastor. The society elected Bro. Scott, and he accepted and came from Vermont to attend the meeting. The acceptance of Bro. Scott was not with a view of serving them, as he had left the station the year before, and retired to Vermont on account of ill health. He having thus answered the emergency of the case, returned to his residence in Vermont, leaving the brethren to supply their pulpit temporarily until matters should assume a more settled form. When the Bishop's preacher was fully excluded from the pulpit, he retired to an old house a little out of the city, and summoned the church there to hear him preach, and because they did not obey, he, by a published document, declared them all out of the church *en masse*. This was a critical moment in the history of our departed brother. Foreseeing the storm, he and I had made a solemn pledge to each other to stand or fall together with the Lowell churches, and if the bishop succeeded in crushing them, we would leave the church together, raise an independent banner, and gather as many as possible around

it. But such was not the result ; at this point the bishop came in person and a compromise was effected, by which the spoils of battle were divided ; the brethren rescinded their anti-episcopal resolutions, the preacher recalled his proclamation and took them back *en masse*, and the bishop gave them the preacher they first desired. This put an end to the controversy and dissolved the pledge by which Bro. Scott had agreed to secede from the church, in the event that the churches were subdued by the episcopal power. It was soon seen, however, that nothing had been gained to the cause of christian liberty, for the act of the preacher in expelling the whole church without trial, by public proclamation, was carried up to conference and sustained by the presiding bishop as Methodistically lawful. At this point there was a pause in the life of our departed Brother, for the first and only time in his life, he appeared to hesitate and waver in his purpose. It was, however, but for a short time ; reflection soon convinced him that his work was done in the M. E. Church, and in November 1842, he issued the first number of the "True Wesleyan," in which he declared his connection with the church of his early choice forever dissolved. The paper was issued in anticipation of its date, which was January 7th, 1843.

From this moment he was regarded, by friends and foes, as the originator and leader of a new religious community. He was president of the Convention held at Utica, New York, May 1843, at which the Wesleyan connection was organized. He was also elected president of the first General Conference, which assembled in Cleveland, Ohio, October 1844, but declined the honor, on the ground that he had been president of the convention for the organization, and he thought it belonged to some other brother, and another was elected in his stead.

At this conference the paper, which he had started upon his own responsibility, and the nucleus of a book concern which he had collected, were made over to the connection, and Bro. Scott was unanimously elected the publishing agent. In this position he exerted himself to the utmost of his strength, until he was driven from his post by the premonitions of death.

These remarks have been made, and this little outline of history given to illustrate his perseverance, the trait of character with which we commenced this division of our discourse. He commenced his battle against slavery in the M. E. Church, and when he could no lon-

ger oppose it to advantage there, he left her communion, and renewed the battle without, throwing around him the bulwarks of a religious anti-slavery organization, whence he could bring the engines of truth to bear more effectually upon the bastile walls of slavery.

5. To conclude, that Orange Scott was an extraordinary man, a mere glance at his life must prove, if we only observe where he started and what he accomplished. We have seen that he lit his way from obscurity by his own light, and that he rose to a rank of distinction by his own energy. During his sunny days in the M. E. Church, few were more popular, and none led on the embattled hosts of Methodism against their common foes with a bolder front, and to more certain victory than did Orange Scott. Some had more scholastic polish, and some blew more silver toned instruments, but his was the trump of God sounding the notes of uncompromising truth, and at the well known sound, more were rallied from the valleys and hills and rocky cliffs of New England, than by the notes of any other trumpeter that ever yet passed that way.

The following was written of him in 1843, by one of the most popular ministers in the New England Conference, Rev. Charles Adams:—

“While I write, affecting recollections are pressing upon me. It was but half a score of years since, that I bade adieu to the classic bowers of old Bowdoin, and was permitted to enroll myself among the ministry of the Methodist E. Church. In those days, and moving amid the ranks of the New England itinerancy, one might be seen who was distinguished among many.—Dedicated to Christ and the eternal weal of the souls of men, he passed along these hills and vales in the true spirit of a Methodist missionary. It was a beauteous trump with which he sounded forth the gospel of salvation. And when it was announced that he would speak, multitudes might be seen gathering to the place of assembly. And when he was seen approaching in the distance, it was as if from that company some celestial song arose, singing, “How beautiful upon the mountains are the feet of him that bringeth good tidings—that bringeth good tidings of good, that publishes salvation.” He spoke, and thousands listened with delight. And as along the street or through the winding footpaths, they sought again their rural homes, it was to remember—long remember the sacred instruction they had heard, and him whose lips had uttered it.

Such was ORANGE SCOTT in 1833. I will say nothing worse of him, than that, in 1843, he seems aiming, in company with his coadjutors, to stigmatize the church which, in the former period he loved, and of which he was then a distinguished and successful minister."

When he felt it his duty to oppose the measures of the church and to conflict with her authorities, none ever did it more fearlessly and effectually. When he saw that he could accomplish no more by opposition in the church, he as openly and fearlessly left it. No one will be likely to dispute the assertion, that no one man ever produced more agitation in the bosom of the M. E. Church than Orange Scott. It is true he has not done all that has been done to agitate the church on the slave question, by which she has been rent asunder, between the North and South, but he has been the leading agent, the exciting instrumentality which stirred up other elements around him, that would otherwise have slumbered, so that we may venture to say, that if there had been no Orange Scott, there would have been no division of the M. E. Church on the subject of slavery. These things will appear right or wrong as we take different sides of the controversy, but right or wrong, they show the energy and power of the man, and now that he is dead, the remembrance of these things proclaim that a prince and a great man has fallen this day in Israel. But he has gone, the mortal pang has done its work and spent its force; nature has ceased its struggles, the wheels of life have come to a final pause; "he sleeps his last sleep, he has fought his last battle," and we have no doubt he has won the final victory.

It is appropriate that a more particular application should be made of the event which has given rise to this discourse.

1. In the death of Brother Scott, his family have lost a strong protector, a safe counsellor, a bountiful provider, a faithful husband, and a kind and solicitous father. Their consolation is that their loss is his eternal gain, and that with them is left the promise of Him who is the father of the fatherless, and the widow's God. May he defend them by his power, guide them by his wisdom, console them by his spirit, and save them forever through the riches of his grace in Christ Jesus.

2. The Wesleyan connection has lost one of its projectors, and one of the able advocates of its principles, and brightest ornaments.

It becomes us to humble ourselves before God and seek to become more efficient through his grace, and pray the Lord of the harvest to send forth more laborers into his vineyard. I would not undervalue other brethren, but his death, as a whole, is a greater loss to the connection than would have been the death of any other individual.

Aside from his family, no one has greater reason to feel this loss than myself. We have been associated together in business, in counsel and effort from the time the first blow was struck towards the Wesleyan organization. Many and severe have been the conflicts in which we have stood side by side, shoulder to shoulder, hand to hand, heart to heart. I have always found him wise in counsel and strong in battle, and I do not degrade myself, nor do I tax my vanity, when I say that I have felt strong in battle because I had such a man as Orange Scott to fight by my side. But now I have to stand in the conflict without him, he was not quite a year older than myself, and yet he has fallen, while, through the mercy of God, I remain to prosecute the moral contest without him, in possession of unimpaired health and undecayed energies. I shall enjoy one consolation as I shall hereafter renew my efforts for the overthrow of slavery; it is this, if I may hope to win new trophies in the cause of the oppressed, I shall know I have the sympathies of his now sainted spirit, and that he will celebrate each successive triumph upon his golden harp. This thought shall animate me and spirit me on in the day of trial and conflict. It is to be hoped that we shall all realize the loss we have sustained in the death of Brother Scott, and attempt, so far as we can, to fill the breach by increased efforts and renewed zeal in the cause of reform. Let us as a stimulous to action frequently read over his dying testimony, which is as follows :

“The thought of leaving our young but *growing* Church, of being laid aside in the midst of my years, to act no more in my Master’s Vineyard, touches me to the very quick, yet I know my Master can do his work without the aid of such a feeble worm as I am. Yes, he can and will carry forward the glorious work of Salvation, whoever of his ministers may die. My confidence, brethren, in the truthfulness of our principles, and the propriety of our organization remains undiminished. This I am happy to proclaim, even with my dying breath. Let all our ministers and peo-

ple keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of perfectness, and there is nothing to fear.

“ My views of the Christian Religion remain unchanged. The same is true with regard to the Anti-Slavery and Wesleyan movements. You have, dear brethren, my dying testimony in regard to the holiness of the cause we have espoused. I mean the abolition of Slavery and Church reform.”

3. The Slave has lost one of his early, devoted and able advocates. The anti-slavery character of brother Scott is so notorious, so seen and read of all men, that extended remarks are uncalled for, on this point. He has not been permitted to live to witness the abolition of slavery in this country, but come that day must, and come it will; and when it comes the name of Orange Scott shall be remembered and mingle in the songs.

We have thus far dwelt upon the virtues of our departed brother, nor would it be appropriate to enlarge upon his faults. All men have faults, and Orange Scott was but a man, and per consequence he had faults. We may fearlessly assert, however, that his most prominent faults were not the result of any corruption of heart, but of a little excess of those mental qualities which are the highest virtues when possessed in a more moderate degree.

Is it said that Orange Scott was ambitious? The reply is, that if it be true, he was ambitious only for the maintenance of truth and right. No man can show that he ever resorted to intrigue, or dishonesty of any kind, as a means of gratifying his ambition. If he ever sought to gratify his ambition as an end, he sought to make himself most distinguished in maintaining what he believed to be right as the means.

If it be insisted that he was obstinate, the reply is, he was obstinate only when he thought he was right, and to produce this, required only a little excess of that firmness which constituted the basis of his virtuous character, and which fitted him for his age and his work. If it be insisted that he was ultra and rash, it was because he lived in advance of his age. He advocated no sentiments, and resorted to no measures, which are not destined, very soon, to become the moderate sober views of the world. If he was imprudent and careless of himself, which I regard as his greatest fault, it was only a little misapplication of that industry, punctuality, and energy which ever pushed him onward and made

him what he was, and enabled him to accomplish what he did. In a word, whatever errors he had, they never led him to compromise his integrity or his honor.

It was observable by those most intimately connected with him, that for the last year or two, there was less power in his movements, than there had been in time past. The cause is now explained; it was the result of ill health. His resolution and zeal led him to continue his efforts long after he was unfit for business. For the last year and a half he has been wasting, and while he was thinking, planning, writing, toiling to promote the cause in which he was engaged, consumption was gnawing at his vitals and drinking up the springs of his life.

It is also true that during the last few years of his life, he was not as distinguished for his devotion and religious power as he had been in former times. This was owing to two causes, viz; first, his business, from its nature and pressing claims, separated him from those religious associations and exercises which inspire devotion; and secondly, his declining health doubtless oppressed his mind. But as he approached the borders of the spirit world, the energies of his mind rallied as in other days; he saw himself approaching the gates of death, and laid hold upon the arm of the conqueror, who held expanded the grim monster's jaws, and rolled back the dark and bitter waters of that hour, that his soul might pass in peace and hope to the world of safety, light and everlasting joy. He died without a struggle; he departed as departs the sun when it goes down without a cloud, leaving a lingering glory upon the hills in evidence that it has not expired or lost its light, but is a sun still, travelling in its glory, though visible only to other spheres. He left us as leaves the morning star when it melts away and is lost amid the beams of the solar orb. Orange Scott, the subject of these remarks, was born in Vermont, in the year of our Lord 1800. He was converted to God in 1820. He was received on trial in the New England Conference, as a Methodist traveling preacher in 1822. He withdrew from the church in Nov. 1842. In May 1843 he assisted in the organization of the Wesleyan Methodist Connection of America, by a Convention of which he was President. He died July 31, 1847, in the forty-eighth year of his age. He is dead, but his name shall live, and future genera-

tions will do him justice. When this nation shall be redeemed from the sin and disgrace of slavery, when the church shall be washed from its pollution, and when the bondman's jubilee shall come, his name shall be heard in the swelling song. Then shall his memory rise as incense while those who opposed him and shot the forked tongue of slander across his path, shall be forgotten, or be remembered only to perpetuate a recollection of the errors of the times in which they lived. He sleeps, but he sleeps in Christ. I will only add, peace to his memory. AMEN.

