

“I go the way of all the earth: he thou strong, therefore, and show thyself a man.” 1 Kings, ii. 2.

THIS was the counsel David the king gave to his son, who was to reign as his successor on the throne of Israel. Solomon was at this time young and inexperienced, and an immense trust was to be committed to his hand at the death of his father: the government of the Jewish nation was to be administered by him; and, in addition to this, he was to superintend the building of the temple, which was to be one of the most splendid edifices ever erected. Although it had been the purpose of David to build the house of the Lord, God told him he had chosen his son to perform this work. Desirous of contributing all in his power toward this object, David made great preparations for this work. (See 1 Chronicles, xxii. 14, 15, 16.) “Now, behold, in my trouble I have prepared for the house of the Lord an hundred thousand talents of gold, and a thousand thousand talents of silver; and of brass and iron without weight: (for it is in abundance:) timber also and stone have I prepared: and thou mayest add thereto.—Moreover, there are workmen with thee in abundance, hewers and workers of stone and timber, and all manner of cunning men for every manner of work.—Of the gold, the silver, and the brass, and the iron there is no number. *Arise, therefore, and be doing and the Lord be with thee.*”

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This was an undertaking of great magnitude and difficulty: and, to secure its success, it would be necessary for Solomon to give heed to the instructions of his pious and dying father: "I go the way of all the earth: be thou strong, therefore, and show thyself a man: and keep the charge of the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and his testimonies, as it is written in the law of Moses, that thou mayest prosper in all that thou doest, and whithersoever thou turnest thyself."— 1 Kings, ii. 1, 3. This counsel has respect to two points, viz. 1st. The conduct of Solomon as a man. 2d. His conduct as a servant of God. Let us contemplate these two points.

I. The conduct of Solomon as a man.—He was to show himself a man.

To secure this object one must be—1st, *Intelligent*. An ignorant person can never secure that respect from his fellow men that is necessary to fit him for any important station in society. He may be amiable and kind, and even pious—but unless he is known as a man of intelligence, he will never occupy a commanding position before the community. It was this that raised Franklin from obscurity, and he diligently employed all his leisure hours in its pursuit, until he had acquired a fame as a man of science with which any might have been satisfied. And in this trait Solomon excelled. He sought wisdom, and he obtained

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it—and was by it qualified for administering the government of the nation, an superintending the building of that magnificent Temple.

2d. *Punctuality* is another important qualification for him who would succeed in any great enterprise. By punctuality, I mean exactness in all our engagements: the term is commonly employed to express the opposite of tardiness in the performance of our duties. If this important duty were faithfully observed, many evils that now exist would be avoided. The late attendance of many in the house of the Lord on the Sabbath, and through the week, would not be so common, if this duty were observed, and its happy influence would be seen and felt in all the transactions of life. A punctual minister is an example to his flock, and he never fails to make a punctual people. So with the merchant, the tradesman, or men of any profession.

The individual who is not punctual is generally in a hurry, and is apt to let one engagement crowd upon another, and some duties are very likely to be neglected; but the man who does every thin at the *time appointed*, inspires condidence in his movements. This trait was strikingly exhibited in the life of General Washington. It was said of him, that when he designed to meet Congress at noon, he never failed to be passing the door of the Hall while the clock was striking the hour of

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twelve. With him twelve o'clock was twelve o'clock. If he invited a party to dine with him at four o'clock, which was his dinner hour, they must be punctual, or have a cold dinner. He would tell them that his cook never asked whether the company had arrived, but whether the *hour* had. In 1789, when he visited Boston, after the war, he appointed eight o'clock as the hour when he would set out for Salem; and while old South clock was striking he was in the act of mounting his horse. The troop which were to accompany him were parading in Tremont street, after his departure, and it was not until the General reached Charles River bridge that they overtook him. On the arrival of the troop the General, with perfect good humour, said, "Major, I thought you had been long enough in my family to know when it was eight o'clock."

Punctuality was one of the many excellencies of the late Pastor of this Church, the Rev. A. Harris. During the three years that he was with us, he was never known to be five minutes behind the time of any appointment.

3d. *Energy* is another important attribute for him who would succeed in any good cause. By this trait, we mean force of character. The man who is energetic, will press forward through difficulties that would intimidate the faint-hearted. Intelligence and punctuality cannot compensate for the absence of this.

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Energy is the impelling power, and, without it, the many obstacles that are in the way of success in any undertaking would never be surmounted. Franklin possessed this trait in an uncommon degree; and it was owing to this that he vanquished every difficulty, and at length gained the summit of the hill of science.

4th. *Perseverance* is another essential requirement to success, in any undertaking. The man who possesses this characteristic, will not give up until he succeeds. Some commence well and promise fair, but they soon grow weary, and begin to flag, and consequently fail of success. The grand defect with such is, they do not possess perseverance. By perseverance, Sir Isaac Newton became what he was. The temple of science is represented as being on the summit of a mountain difficult of ascent, and none ever gain it without persevering toil.

If Solomon would show himself a man, these were some of the traits that were necessary to that end.

But there was another point on which he was counselled by his pious father, which relates to his conduct as a man of piety. This is the second point to be considered.

II. Solomon's conduct as a servant of God.— he was urged by his pious father “to keep the charge of the Lord his God, to walk in his ways, to keep his statutes and commandments,

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and his judgements, and his testimonies, as it is written in the law of Moses, that thou mayest prosper in all that thou doest, and whithersoever, thou turnest thyself.” Several points in this passage are worthy of our consideration.

1st. Solomon was instructed by David to obey the will of God. Without a spirit of obedience, no one can reasonably hope for the the Divine favour. He who walks according to the precepts of the Lord, will obtain the blessings of Heaven, and be directed in all his ways; but those who disregard the commands of God, or forsake his service, will eventually find that the way of transgressors is hard.

2d. Solomon’s obedience was to be regulated according to *the written word of God*, or the Holy Scriptures. He was to keep the statutes of the Lord, as they were *written* in the law of Moses. Many suppose they obey God, by following the impulse of their own feeling, or by making, as the Roman Catholic does, tradition the rule of their conduct, or by pursuing the course marked out by world. If we would render that obedience which will meet with the approbation of God, we must take the Bible as the only infallible rule of faith and practice, and conform our views of truth and our actions to its requirements. Let it ever be borne in mind, that the Bible is the only “sure word of prophecy, whereunto we do well that we take heed; as unto a light that

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shineth in a dark place.” Test every sentiment, try every spirit by this standard; and, if they do not abide this test, renounce them.

3d. If this kind of obedience was rendered, Solomon was assured he would prosper in his undertakings. Whatever other qualifications he might have, unless he possessed genuine piety he had no reason to expect he would succeed in governing the nation, or in erecting the temple for the worship of the Most High. But having these various qualifications, the promise was *that he would prosper in what he did*.

How cheering was this information to this young man in view of the responsibility that was to rest upon him as king at the death of his father! and how consoling are the many promises God has given to his people, that he will be with them, and prosper them, if they put their trust in him, and obey all his commandments! In reviewing our past history, as a church, and as citizens, we have to exclaim, with grateful hearts, “*Hitherto hath the Lord helped us.*” Though we have been undeserving of his favours, he has been with us in six troubles, and in the seventh he has not forsaken us; and if we are faithful to our trust, and obedient to his commands, he will yet do greater things for us. Let us then trust in the Lord, and do good, and verily we will be sustained in every time of adversity; and

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The subject, thus discussed, prepares the
way for entering on the consideration of the
life and character of our esteemed and lamented
fellow citizen, JAMES FORTEN.

The traits we have been contemplating
marked the character of our lamented friend;
and it was owing to these that he was held in
high esteem by the community, and was enabled
to effect so great an amount of good.

James Forten, whom we have so recently
borne to the house appointed for all—though
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He was born in this city, on the second day
of September, 1766, in Third street, near Walnut.
He was the son of Thomas Forten, who
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woman of fine mind, and of remarkable industry and had the pleasure of living to see her son honoured and respected by his fellow citizens.

When he was a boy, the American colonies were subject to the control of Great Britain—Independence had not then been thought of. At this period there were not ten free coloured families in this city; and it was not until the year 1787 that the society of Friends ceased to buy and sell slaves.

At the death of his father, he was but seven years old; and he was, at this early age, remarkable for his activity and decision of character, though he did not enjoy the advantages of an early education. In those days it was thought the highest folly to undertake to teach coloured people. As strange as it may seem, some of the first copies of writing that were ever done by Forten, and others, were sent to England to show that coloured people could be taught to write. Anthony Benezet, Dr. Benjamin Rush, and a few others, established a school for coloured people in this city. Forten left at nine years of age, and was employed by Benezet in a grocery store—he never went to school afterwards. At the age of fourteen, as strange as it may seem, his young heart was tried within him, on account of the wrongs his country was suffering from Great Britain. Already had the Revolution com—

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menced, and he entreated his mother, whom he loved, to let him leave her and his home, and engage in the struggle for independence. She yielded to his solicitations, and he went on board of the Royal Louis, Stephen Decatur, Sr., commander, in the capacity of a powder boy. He was out but a very little time, before he found himself amidst the roar of cannon, the cries of the wounded and dying. Their ship engaged in an action with an English vessel, named the Lawrence, which, after a very severe battle, and loss of many lives, surrendered, to the joy of all on board of the American ship, in which Forten seemed to share largely. The care of Providence in protecting and preserving the life of this young patriot through all his difficulties, was wonderfully manifested during the battle. Every one was killed at the gun at which he was stationed, but himself. Soon after this victory, which filled his soul with redoubled ardour, and hurried him on for new conquest, he embarked in the same vessel; but in this voyage they were not successful: they were overtaken by three English vessels, and they were soon forced to strike their colours, and they became prisoners of war. This was a time when he became much distressed, for he was placed in trying circumstances. It was customary to exchange prisoners of war; and he had the knowledge of a fact, that if prisoners of his complexion were

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ever exchanged, they were inevitably sent to the West Indies, and there doomed to perpetual slavery. But Providence interposed again for his deliverance; he was placed on board the Amphyon, Captain Beasley commander. Forten, being strongly marked with that trait of character which ever will make friends, Captain Beasley saw in him, courage, independence, and firmness; and, accompanying these were, humility, meekness, gentleness, and courtesy of manners. Possessing these qualities, he soon became the companion of the captain's son; and when he saw the interest which his son took in young Forten, he took a much deeper interest in his welfare. The captain proposed to send him home with his son to England, and pointed out to him the road to return a wealthy and educated man under the protection of his son; and, of course, with freedom and equality. But what was his reply, notwithstanding the danger that awaited him of being exchanged and sent into slavery? "No! No! I have been taken prisoner for the liberties of my country, and never will prove a traitor to her interest." This was a noble sentiment; and such a sentiment he held till death. After he could not be prevailed upon to take up with the offer, he was put on board the frigate Old Jersey, but he received from Captain Beasley a protection, which prevented him from being removed from the ship, of be-

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Shortly after his return, by his own consent, Mr. Robert Bridges took him as an apprentice to the sail-making business. He was not long at his trade until, by his uncommon activity, industry and integrity, he had gained the affection and confidence of Mr. Bridges. Before he was free, he made him foreman in his shop, and, in fact, committed to him the control of all his business. He remained in that situation till 1798, when Mr. Bridges gave up business. He then took the establishment, and commenced business in his own name. Mr. Bridges having a number of apprentices, they all, with one consent, agreed to take Mr. Forten as their new master. This shows the high esteem in which he was held by those who had been formerly his fellow apprentices. Having already gained for himself a reputation as a man of business, he had no difficulty in keeping the customers of Mr. Bridges. Among those who at first entrusted to him large or-

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ders for work, were Messrs. Thomas, Francis, Willing, Clappier, and many others of like character. Providence seemed to smile on him, and prospered him in all he did, and whithersoever he turned himself. Before he was married he had twenty-five apprentices, and a large number of hands in his employ. He was soon able to purchase and pay for the large house where he carried on his business. He was also at this time able to support respectably his mother, a sister and her four children. Some time afterward, he was married to an interesting lady, but this happy union was soon dissolved, in the providence of God, by the removal, by death, of his beloved partner. He married again several years afterward. This connexion continued till the death of our esteemed friend, on the fourth day of March, 1842, when he left a widow and a large family to mourn over the painful bereavement.

His habits, as a man of business, were rarely surpassed. Though deprived of early education, he possessed a large share of common sense. Through a long life he devoted a portion of his time to useful reading, which improved his mind and qualified him to move in every sphere of action with wisdom and effect. He was well acquainted with human nature, and demeaned himself, in every circle of society, so as to acquire the respect and esteem of all who knew him. During a long

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business life, there has not been a man of colour in America who was more extensively acquainted with merchants, at home or abroad, than he; and so faithful was he in all his commercial transactions, and so dilligent in his profession, as to secure the confidence of all who dealt with him. On this account his business increased, by which he accumulated a large property. The confidence that was reposed in him at first was never diminished, notwithstanding the many changes that have passed over society. He always carried on his business with accuracy, with untiring industry, rigid integrity and great punctuality.

I here may add, that he did not *make haste* to get riches; he never overreached, nor took an advantage of his neighbour in the time of emergency or pecuniary embarrassment. He was enabled to leave for his family an ample supply of good things of this life, and this, too, without fraud, or without causing the sorrows and tears of the poor and needy, the widow or the fatherless; and as he increased in wealth, he also increased in benevolence and liberality. Those traits of character were conspicuous through life. He was a patron of all our institutions. We find him among some of the first of the founders of the Episcopal church in this city, or, we may say, in America, and one of its honoured officers

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during life. He was the last survivor of those who commenced the enterprise, and, by his death, all the originators of that church have been erased from the catalogue of the living. His attendance at church was regular; his seat was not vacant, except when indisposition of body prevented him from being present; and he was punctual too. Yet, with all his attachment to his own church, he was found worshipping with other Christian denominations, when there was no service in his own church. He was no sectarian; and perhaps there is not a church in the city to whose erection he not contributed. No one was ever turned away from his door when he came to solicit aid for the institutions of religion. He was a man given to hospitality—strangers were often found at his board. The oppressed man, the mariner, the soldier, the Indian, all found in him a friend. Were I to enumerate all the instances of his generosity, which distinguished him through life, they would fill a volume. He has, on several occasions, jeopardized his life to save the drowning man. He received a certificate from the managers of the Humane Society of Philadelphia, in testimony of the respect in which he was held by that society. And, my friends, it is with great emotion of heart, I say that I owe much gratitude to that good man, for what he did to assist my father, to purchase from

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slavery my mother, three sisters, two brothers and myself, in the year 1810.

During the last visit but one I paid him, before his death, he spoke of the satisfaction it gave him to think that he had done any thing in helping to free our family; at the same time exhorting a younger brother and myself to walk in the footsteps of our father, whom he respected. There are many, like myself, who owe much to him for their freedom. We all, as citizens of these United States, the young and aged, should regard his memory, for the character he sustained for us, and for those noble principles he has established; and for his persevering efforts to keep before our minds this one subject—"this is our country; and here on this soil stay, for our fathers helped to fight for it, and have enriched it with their blood; their graves are with us, and with them here stay—here die." He has left us sound and correct principles, touching all important questions that interest us as a people. Adhering to his counsel, we cannot err, because he loved his God as the supreme good, and his neighbour as himself. He was truly a philanthropist. Every person was his neighbour, he recognized in all a brother, a child of the same common parent, an heir of immortality, and a fellow traveller to eternity. He knew how to make allowance for the prejudices of individuals, and never

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was guilty of impugning their motives. He endeavoured to lead with the cords of love and the bands of man, all his fellow men to think and judge for themselves what is right; having done this, he laid a foundation for a glorious fabric. He was a man who dared to think for himself; and doing so, he brought a complete sacrifice to the altar of peace. His ear received instruction, his memory retained information, his judgment discerned between truth and error, his eye was fixed on the glory of God, and the public good, and his feet pursued on in the path that leads to immortal blessedness. And yet brethren, it was with this good man, as with Isaac, Jacob, and David, he had to go the way of all the earth, and leave his children, and the interest of his people. Time would fail me, if I would indulge on all the particulars of his life. It was not my design. I only intended briefly to relate some, from which a tolerable judgment might be formed of his character; but I cannot close without taking notice of the last scenes of his life which were very triumphant and glorious. Our esteemed friend, from correct habits of life from youth, enjoyed good health; his constitution was remarkably sound and strong; scarcely was he ever prevented from attending to his business, more than a day or so. The only sickness that he ever had, was the one that proved fatal, which seized him about

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nine months previous to his death. After the attack, he went out a few times, but never was able to attend to his business again; but while his bodily strength failed, he still retained the full vigour of mind. In all his sickness he manifested great resignation to the will of his Heavenly Father; no murmur escaped his lips; and as he obeyed the will of God, taking the Bible as the only infallible rule of faith and practice, the Lord that had been with him through life, in all difficulties and in prosperity, forsook him not in the last trying hour. He was able till the last three weeks of his sickness to be about the house, and meet with friends, and was always cheerful. On many occasions would he exhort them to prepare for a sick and dying hour, and said he felt that it was a blessed thing, that he had attended to it in health, and now in his affliction he had a Saviour that he could lean on, and on whom he could cast all his care. He knew on whom he had believed, and that he was able to save him. To one he said, "all my hope for salvation is on the righteousness of Christ, I have done nothing to merit heaven." His strength failed him, the week before death, so that he had to keep his bed. Then came the last and great trial of his faith, which was more precious than gold that perisheth. During the last few days of his sickness, he felt that his Saviour was near. He still saw those who called to

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see him, and told his family to admit all, for he seemed to wish to give the parting hand to all his fellow citizens and friends. Many of his friends manifested their affection and respect for him, by the falling tear, as they gazed upon him fast sinking in death. He alway was composed, and would, most affectionately, press home upon them their everlasting concern, telling them that here they had no abiding place, and begged of them to attend, amidst the multiplicity of business, to the one thing needful. But the hour arrived, when, like David, he was to give his last charge to his sons and family. He was aroused out of a doze at two o'clock, and gave orders that all his family should come around his bed side, and with them was a minister and a few friends. Oh! what a scene presented itself in that chamber of death; there lay the affectionate husband, the kind parent, the ever faithful friend, the honest citizen. And from that aged brow the cold sweat of death was dropping; all the skill of the physicians had failed, and the raging disease was breaking asunder the silver cord of life, and the tender tie of social attachment and conjugal affection. While friends were bathed in tears, he in the sweetest tones said to them, "weep not, all is well with me," and then commenced to give them charge, telling his wife that God would defend the cause of the widow, that he

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would never leave nor forsake her; bidding her to cast all her care on Jesus. To his children and sister, his charge was in the language of my text, “to keep the charge of the Lord thy God, and to serve him with a perfect heart, and God would be with them.” Especially to his sons, he charged them to honour and love their mother, as he did his, when she was left a widow, and the Lord would lengthen out their days. To his sons-in-law and their families, he gave advice, and counseled them to live the life of the righteous. Then he repeated those beautiful lines:

“For I know that my Redeemer liveth, and that he shall stand at the latter day upon the earth. And though, after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God.”

He then asked the minister to address them, and pray with them. He continued to sink hourly, yet retained his reason; but for three days he could not be understood, as his speech failed; and on the 4th day of March, at 8 o’clock, he sunk quietly in the arms of death without a struggle. He ascended, we doubt not, to the world of unfading glory.

To the young men of the Bible Association, and the different associations of this city, I should be unfaithful, were I to close this imperfect address, without employing a few moments longer in stimulating you to take heed to those things you have learned of our beloved father and friend. You will look in

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vain for him in the circle where he has often been, to counsel and address you, on all the subjects that interest you as young men. The last public meeting at which he addressed you, was in this house. Then he counseled you on the subject of union among yourselves as a people. You have had his farewell address on this subject. But what are some of the things you have learned from him?

1st. To love your God and keep his commandments; to love and honour your parents, and to respect those whom Providence has called to rule over you; to love your country, and never prove traitors to its interests under any circumstances. These traits were seen in him at the age of fourteen.

2d. Make an open profession of the religion of Jesus Christ, and connect yourself to the people of the Lord; support religion and all the ordinances thereof.

3d. Be industrious in your callings, whatever they be. Cultivate your mind, by acquiring useful knowledge.

4th. Cultivate love to all mankind.

5th. Abhor dissimulation and intrigue, with every species of deception.

6th. Help the oppressed of all nations, by prayer and alms; however limited your means may be, turn none away.

7th. Love the Bible, and study it, for it is the only true basis of all education. What

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book is adapted like the inspired volume, to every stage in the progress of education? What book fills the mind, equally, in all the various forms of its capacity, and all the various states of its knowledge? Where shall we look for such a collection of important and authentic information; the most dignified and genuine philosophy; the most comprehensive views of God and man? In vain may we search the treasures of ancient and modern genius and learning, for a volume equally important to the old and the young, the wise and the ignorant, the prosperous and the unfortunate, the happy and the miserable, the great and the humble, the ruler and the people. Under all forms of government, in peace and in war, in national happiness and national adversity, and all the various revolutions to which the human family are subject, the Bible is the only book that is equally indispensable.

Young men, study this practice its precepts, and you shall be prosperous in all your undertakings through life. You shall have true peace in the hour of affliction, and like your departed father and friend, hope in the hour of death, and be able to say, "O death, where is thy sting?—O grave, where is thy victory?" And have an abundant entrance into rest.

In conclusion, dear friends, what ravages has death made amongst us within a few

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In conclusion, dear friends, what ravages has death made amongst us within a few

months. First, as to this congregation, death has leaped into our fold, and several victims have fallen beneath his iron arm. And the young shepherd here has been torn from his flock, and left them to mourn. And, as fellow citizens, several valuable members, within five months, have gone. Where is our friend Robert Gordon? who remained with us for nearly fifty years, with so much respectability, and served so faithfully the community at large. He was a faithful Christian, a zealous supporter of all our religious institutions, an honourable and esteemed officer in the church, with our friend Forten, for many years, and like him, has gone to his reward and crown in Heaven. He is no more here on earth, but at rest with his God, and in the society of many of his fellow labourers, that had gone before him.

Brethren and friends, as men, we must mourn at the said ravages of death, but as Christians, we should improve the dispensations of Providence. God seems to speak us in the whirlwind and the storm, then we should give to Him our undivided attention. Let the losses we have suffered, call our attention to serious examination. Let it lead us willingly to improve our privileges. Let it strengthen the ties of our brotherhood, and let it cement us in one united band. Soon all that are in this house, will sleep with the ashes of our

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