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By George Whitefield

Sermon 57

Zech. 4:10 — “For who hath despised the day of small things?”

Men, brethren, and fathers, at sundry times and in diverse manners, God spake to the fathers by the prophets, before he spoke to us in these last days by his Son. And as God is a sovereign agent, and his sacred Spirit bloweth when and where it listeth, surely he may reveal and make known his will to his creatures, when, where, and how he pleaseth; “and who shall say unto him, what doest thou?” Indeed, this seems to be one reason, to display his sovereignty, why he chose, before the canon of scripture was settled, to make known his mind in such various methods, and to such a variety of his servants and messengers.

Hence it is, that we hear, he talked with Abraham as “a man talketh with a friend.” To Moses he spoke “face to face.” To others by “dreams in the night,” or by “visions” impressed strongly on their imaginations. This seems to be frequently the happy lot of the favorite evangelical prophet Zechariah, I call him evangelical prophet, because his predictions, however they pointed at some approaching or immediate event, ultimately terminated in Him, who is the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end of all the lively oracles of God. The chapter from which our text is selected, among many other passages, is a striking proof of this. An angel, that had been more than once sent to him on former occasions, appears again to him, and by way of vision, and “waked him, (to use his own words) as a man that is wakened out of his sleep.” Prophets, and the greatest servants of God, need waking sometimes out of their drowsy frames.

Methinks I see this man of God starting out of his sleep, and being all attention: the angel asked him, “what seest thou?” He answers, “I have looked, and behold, a candle-stick all of gold,” an emblem of the church of God, “with a bowl upon the top of it, and seven lamps thereon, and seven pipes to the seven lamps, which were upon the top thereof;” implying, that the church, however reduced to the lowest ebb, should be preserved, be kept supplied, and shining, through the invisible, but not less real, because invisible aids and operations of the blessed Spirit of God. The occasion of such an extraordinary vision, if we compare this passage with the second chapter of the Prophecy of the prophet Haggai, seems to be this: It was now near eighteen years since the Jewish people had been delivered from their long and grievous Babylonian captivity; and being so long deprived of their temple and its worship, which fabric had been rased even to the ground, one would have imagined, that immediately upon their return, they should have postponed all private works, and with their united strength have first set about rebuilding that once stately and magnificent structure. But they, like too many Christians of a like luke-warm stamp, though all acknowledged that this church-work was a necessary work, yet put themselves and others off, with this godly pretense, “The time is not come, the time that the Lord's house should be built.” The time is not come! What, not in eighteen years! For so long had they now been returned from their state of bondage: and pray, why was not the time come? The prophet Haggai tells them; their whole time was so taken up building for an habitation for their great and glorious Benefactor, the mighty God of Jacob.

This ingratitude must not be passed by unpunished. Omniscience observes, Omnipotence resents it! And that they might read their sin in their punishment, as they thought it best to get rich, and secure houses and lands and estates for themselves, before they set about unnecessary church-work, the prophet tells them, “You have sown much, but bring in little: ye eat, but ye have not enough: ye drink, but ye are not filled with drink: ye clothe you, but there is none warm: and

he that earneth wages, earneth wages to put it into a bag with holes.” Still he goes on thundering and lightening, “Ye looked for much, and lo it came to little: and when ye brought it home, (pleasing yourselves with your fine crops) I did blow upon it: why? Saith the Lord of Hosts; because of mine house that is waste, and ye run every man unto his own house.” A thundering sermon this! delivered not only to the common people, but also unto, and in the presence of “Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, and Joshua, the son of Josedech the high-priest. The prophet's report is believed; and the arm of the Lord was revealed. Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, and Joshua, the son of Josedech (O happy times when church and state are thus combined) with all the remnant of the people, obeyed the voice of the Lord their God, and the words of Haggai the prophet.”

The spirit of Zerubbabel, and of Joshua, and the spirits of all the remnant of the people were stirred up, and they immediately came, disregarding, as it were, their own private buildings, “and did work in the house of the Lord of Hosts their God.” For a while, they proceeded with vigor; the foundation of the house is laid, and the superstructure raised to some considerable height: but whether this fit of hot zeal soon cooled, as is too common, or the people were discouraged by the false representations of their enemies, which perhaps met with too favorable a reception as the court of Darius; it so happened, that the hearts of the magistrates and ministers of the people waxed faint; and an awful chasm intervened, between the finishing and laying the foundation of this promising and glorious work.

Upon this, another prophet, even Zechariah, (who with Haggai had been joint sufferer in the captivity) is sent to lift up the hands that hang down, to strengthen the feeble knees, and by the foregoing instructive vision, to reanimate Joshua and the people in general, and the heart of Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel, in particular, maugre all discouragements, either from inveterate enemies, or from timid unstable friends, or all other obstacles whatsoever. If Haggai thunders, Zechariah's message is as lightening. “This is the word of the Lord unto

Zerubbabel, saying, Not by might, not by power, (not by barely human power or policy) but by my spirit, saith the Lord of Hosts: Who art thou, O great mountain? (thou Sanballat and thy associates, who have been so long crying out, what mean these feeble Jews? However great, formidable, and seemingly insurmountable) before Zerubbabel thou shalt (not only be lowered and rendered more accessible, but) become a plain;” thy very opposition shall, in the end, promote the work, and help to expedite that very building, which thou intendest to put a stop to, and destroy.

And lest Zerubbabel, through unbelief and outward opposition, or for want of more bodily strength, should think this would be a work of time, and that he should not live to see it completed in his days, “The word of the Lord came to Zechariah, saying, The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands also shall finish it, and he shall bring forth the headstone thereof with shoutings, crying, Grace, grace unto it.” Grace! Grace! Unto it: a double acclamation, to show, that out of the abundance of their hearts, their mouth spake; and this with shoutings and crying from all quarters. Even their enemies should see the hand and providence of God in the beginning, continuance, and ending of this seemingly improbable and impracticable work; so that they should be constrained to cry, “Grace unto it,” and wish both the work and the builders much prosperity. But as for its friends, they should be so transported with heart-felt joy in the reflection upon the signal providences which had attended them through the whole process, that they would shout and cry, “Grace, grace unto it:” or, This is nothing but the Lord's doing; God prosper and bless this work more and more, and make it a place where his free grace and glory may be abundantly displayed. Then by a beautiful and pungent sarcasm, turning to the insulting enemies, he utters the spirited interrogation in my text, “Who hath despised the day of small things?” Who are you, that vauntingly said, what can these feeble Jews do, pretending to lay the foundation of a house which they never will have money, or strength, or

power to finish? Or, who are you, O timorous, short-sighted, doubting, though well-meaning people, who, through unbelief, were discouraged at the small beginnings and feebleness of the attempt to build a second temple? And, because you thought it could not come up to the magnificence of the first, therefore were discouraged from so much as beginning to build a second at all?

A close instructive question this; a question, implying, that whenever God intends to bring about any great thing, he generally begins with a day of small things.

As a proof of this, I will not lead you so far back, as to the beginning of time, when the Everlasting "I AM" spoke all things into existence, by his almighty fiat; and out of a confused chaos, "without form and void," produced a world worthy of God to create, and of his favorite creature man, his vicegerent and representative here below, to inhabit, and enjoy in it both himself and his God. And yet, though the heavens declare his glory, and the firmament showeth his handy work, though there is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard, and their line is gone out through all the earth: and by a dumb, yet persuasive language, proves the hand that made them to be divine; yet there have been, and are now, such fools in the world, as to "say in their hearts, There is no God;" or so wise, as by their wisdom, not to know God, or own his divine image to be stamped on that book, wherein these grand things are recorded, and that in such legible characters, that he who runs may read.

Neither will I divert your attention, honored fathers, to the histories of Greece and Rome, or any of the great kingdoms and renowned monarchies, which constitute so great a part of ancient history; but whose beginnings were very small, (witness Romulus's ditch) their progress as remarkably great, and their declension and downfall, when arrived at their appointed zenith, as sudden, unexpected, and marvelous. These make the chief subjects of the learning of our schools; though they make but a mean figure in sacred history, and would not perhaps have been

mentioned at all, had they not been, in some measure, connected with the history of God's people, which is the grand subject of that much despised book, emphatically called, The Scriptures. Whoever hath a mind to inform himself of the one, may read Rollin's Ancient History, and whoever would see the connection with the other, may consult the learned Prideaux's admirable and judicious connection. Books which, I hope, will be strenuously recommended, and carefully studied, when this present infant institution gathers more strength, and grows up into a seat of learning. I can hardly forbear mentioning the final beginnings of Great Britain, now so distinguished for liberty, opulence and renown; and the rise and rapid progress of the American colonies, which promises to be one of the most opulent and powerful empires in the world. But my present views, and the honors done this infant institution this day, and the words of my text, as well as the feelings of my own heart, and I trust, of the hearts of all that hear me, lead me to confine your meditations to the history of God's own peculiar people, which for the simplicity and sublimity of its language, the veracity of its author, and the importance and wonders of the facts therein recorded, if weighed in a proper balance, hath not its equal under the sun. And yet, though God himself hath become an author among us, we will not condescend to give his book one thorough reading. Be astonished, O heavens, at this!

Who would have thought that from once, even from Abraham, and from so small a beginning, as the emigration of a single private family, called out of a land wholly given to idolatry, to be sojourners and pilgrims in a strange land; who would have thought, that from a man, who for a long season was written childless, a man whose first possession in this strange land, was by purchasing a burying place for his wife, and in whose grave one might have imagined he would have buried all future expectations; who would have thought, that from this very man and woman, according to the course of nature, both as good as dead, should descend a numerous offspring like unto the stars of heaven for multitude, and as the sand

which is upon the sea shore innumerable? Nay, who would have imagined, that against all probability, and in all human appearance impossible, a kingdom should arise? Behold a poor captive slave, even Joseph, who was cruelly separated from his brethren, became second in Pharaoh's kingdom. He was sent before to work out a great deliverance, and to introduce a family which should take root, deep root downwards and bear fruit upwards, and fill the land. How could it enter into the heart of man to conceive, that when oppressed by a king, who knew not Joseph, though they were the best, most loyal, industrious subjects this king had, when an edict was issued forth as impolitic as cruel, (since the safety and glory of all kingdoms chiefly consist in the number of its inhabitants) that an outcast, helpless infant should be taken, and bred up in all the learning of the Egyptians, and in that very court from which, and by that very tyrant from whom the edict came, and that the deliverer should be nurtured to be king in Jeshurun?

But time as well as strength would fail me, was I to give you a detail of all the important particulars respecting God's peculiar people; as their miraculous support in the wilderness, the events which took place while they were under a divine theocracy, and during their settlement in Canaan to the time of their return from Babylon, and from thence to the destruction of their second temple, &c. by the Romans. Indeed, considering to whom I am speaking, persons conversant in the sacred and profane history, I have mentioned these things only to stir up your minds by way of remembrance.

But if we descend from the Jewish, to the Christian era, we shall find, that its commencement was, in the eyes of the world, a "day of small things" indeed. Our blessed Lord compares the beginning of its progress in the world, to a grain of mustard-seed, which though the smallest of all seeds when sown, soon becomes a great tree, and so spread, that the "birds of the air," or a multitude of every nation, language and tongue, came and lodged in its branches: and its inward progress in the believer's heart, Christ likens to a little leaven which a woman hid in three

measures of meal. How both the Jewish and Christian dispensations have been, and even to this day are despised, by the wise disputers of this world, on this very account, is manifest to all who read the lively oracles with a becoming attention. What ridicule, obloquy, and inveterate opposition Christianity meets with, in this our day, not only from the open deist, but from formal professors, is too evident to every truly pious soul.

And what opposition the kingdom of grace meets with in the heart, is well known by all those who are experimentally acquainted with their hearts. They know, to their sorrow, what the great apostle of the Gentiles means, by “the Spirit striving against the flesh, and the flesh against the Spirit.”

But the sacred Oracles, and the histories of all ages acquaint us, that God brings about the greatest thing, not only by small and unlikely means, but by ways and means directly opposite to the carnal reasonings of unthinking men. He chooses things that be not, to bring to nought those which are. How did Christianity spread and flourish, by one, who was despised and rejected of men, a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief, and who expired on a cross? He was despised and rejected, not merely by the vulgar and illiterate, but the Rabbis and Masters of Israel, the Scribes and Pharisees, who by the Jewish churchmen were held to in so high a reputation for their outward sanctity, that it became a common proverb, “if only two went to heaven, the one would be a Scribe, and the other a Pharisee.” Yet there were they who endeavored to silence the voice of all his miracles and heavenly doctrine with, “Is not this the Carpenter's son?” Nay, “He is mad, why hear you him? he hath a devil, and casteth out devils by Beelzebub the prince of the devils.” And their despise not only followed him to, but after death, and when in the grave. “We remember (said they) that this deceiver said, after three days I will rise again; command therefore that the sepulcher be made sure;” but, maugre all your impotent precautions, in sealing the stone, and setting a watch, he burst the bars of death asunder, and, according to his repeated predictions, proved

himself to be the Son of God with power, by rising the third day from the dead. And afterwards, in pretense of great multitudes, was he received up into glory; as a proof thereof, he sent down the Holy Ghost, (on the mission of whom he pawned all his credit with his disciples) in such an instantaneous, amazing manner, as one would imagine, should have forced and compelled all who saw it to own, that this was indeed the finger of God.

And yet how was this grand transaction treated? With the utmost contempt: when instantaneously the apostles commenced orators and linguists, and with a divine profusion spoke of the wonderful things of God; “these men (said some) are full of new wine.” And yet by these men, mean fishermen, illiterate men, idiots, in the opinion of the Scribes and Pharisees, and notwithstanding all the opposition of earth and hell, and that too only by the foolishness of preaching, did this grain of mustard- seed grow up, till thousands, ten thousands of thousands, a multitude which no man can number, out of every nation, language and people, came and lodged under the branches of it.

Neither shall it rest here; whatever dark parenthesis may intervene, we are assured, that being still watered by the same divine hand, it shall take deeper and deeper root downward, and bear more and more fruit upward, till the whole earth be filled with the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea. Who shall live when God doth this? Hasten O Lord that blessed time! O let this thy kingdom come! Come, not only by the external preaching of the gospel in the world, but by its renovating, heart- renewing, soul-transforming power, to awakened sinners! For want of this, alas! alas! though we understood all mysteries, could speak with the tongues of men and angels, we should be only like sounding brass, or so many tinkling cymbals.

And yet, what a “day of small things” is the first implantation of the seed of divine life in the soul of man? Well might our Lord, who alone is the author and finisher

of our faith, compare it to a little leaven, which a woman took, and hid in three measures of meal, till the whole was leavened. Low similes, mean comparisons these, in the eyes of those, who having eyes, see not; who having ears, hear not; whose heart, being waxed gross, cannot, will not understand! To such, it is despicable, mysterious, and unintelligible in its description; and, if possible, infinitely more so, when made effectual by the power of God, to the salvation of any individual soul. For the wisdom of God will always be foolishness to natural men. As it was formerly, so it is now; they who are born after the flesh, will persecute those that are born after the spirit. The disciple must be as his master. They that will live godly in him; they that live most godly in him, must suffer persecution. This is so interwoven in the very nature and existence of the gospel, that our Lord makes it one part of the beatitudes, in that blessed sermon which he preached, when, to use the words of my old familiar friend the seraphic Hervey, a mount was his pulpit, and the heavens his sounding board. A part, which, like others of the same nature, I believe, will be little relished by such who are always clamoring against those few highly favored souls, who dare stand up and preach the doctrine of justification by faith alone in the imputed righteousness of Jesus Christ, and are reproached with not preaching, like their master, Morality, as they term it, in his glorious sermon on the mount; for did we more preach, and more live it, we should soon find all manner of evil would be spoken against us for Christ's sake.

But shall this hinder the progress, the growth, and consummation? And shall the Christian therefore be dismayed and discouraged? God forbid! On the contrary, the weakest believer may, and ought, to rejoice and be exceeding glad. And why? For a very good reason; because, he that hath begun the good work, hath engaged also to finish it; though Christ found him as black as hell, he shall present him, and every individual purchased with his blood, without spot or wrinkle, or any such-thing, before the Divine Presence. O glorious prospect! How will the saints

triumph, and the sons of God then shout for joy? If they shouted when God said, “Let there be light, and there was light;” and if there is joy in heaven over one sinner only that repenteth, how will the heavenly arches echo and rebound with praise, when all the redeemed of the Lord shall appear together, and the Son of God shall say, “of all these that thou hast given to me, have I lost nothing.” On the contrary, what weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth will there be, not only amongst the devil and his angels, but amongst the fearful and unbelieving, when they see that all the hellish temptations and devices, instead of destroying, were over-ruled to the furtherance of the gospel in general, and to the increase and growth of grace in every individual believer in particular. And how will despisers then behold and wonder and perish, when they shall be obliged to say, “we fools counted their lives madness, and their end to be without honor; but how are they numbered among the children of God, and how happy is their lot among the saints!”

But whither am I going? Pardon me, my dear hearers, if you think this to be a digression from my main point. It is true, whilst I am musing, the fire begins to kindle. I am flying, but not so high, I trust, as to lose sight of my main subject. And yet, after meditating and talking of the rise and progress of the gospel of the kingdom, I shall find it somewhat difficult to descend so low, as to entertain you with the small beginnings of this infant colony, and of the Orphan-house, in which I am now preaching. But I should judge myself inexcusable on this occasion, if I did not detain you a little longer, in taking a transient view of the traces of divine Providence, in the rise and progress of the colony in general, and the institution of this Orphan-house in particular. Children yet unborn, I trust, will have occasion to bless God for both.

The very design of this settlement, as charity inclines us to hope all things, was, that it might be an Asylum, and a place of business, for as many as were in distress; for foreigners, as well as natives; for Jews and Gentiles. On February 1, a

day, the memory of which, I think, should still be perpetuated, the first embarkation was made with forty-five English families; men, who had once lived well in their native country, and who, with many persecuted Saltzburghers, headed by a good old soldier of Jesus lately deceased, the Rev. Mr. Boltzius, came to find a refuge here. They came, they saw, they labored, and endeavored to settle; but by an essential, though well-meant defect, in the very beginning of the settlement, too well known by some now present, and too long, and too much felt to bear repeating, prohibiting the importation and use of Negroes, &c. their numbers gradually diminished, and matters were brought to so low an ebb, that the whole colony became a proverb of reproach.

About this time, in the year 1737, being previously stirred up thereto by a strong impulse, which I could by no means resist, I came here, after the example of my worthy and reverend friends, Messieurs John and Charles Wesley, and Mr. Ingham, who, with the most disinterested views, had come hither to serve the colony, by endeavoring to convert the Indians. I came rejoicing to serve the colony also, and to become your willing servant for Christ's sake. My friend and father, good Bishop Bensen, encouraged me, though my brethren and kinsmen after the flesh, as well as religious friends, opposed it. I came, and I saw (you will not be offended with me to speak the truth) the nakedness of the land. Gladly did I distribute about the four hundred pounds sterling, which I had collected in England, among my poor parishioners. The necessity and propriety of erecting an Orphan- house, was mentioned and recommended before my first embarkation. But thinking it a matter of too great importance to be set about unwarily, I deferred the farther prosecution for this laudable design till my return to England in the year 1738, for to have priests orders.

Miserable was the condition of many grown persons, as well as children, whom I left behind. Their cause I endeavored to plead, immediately upon my arrival; but being denied the churches, in which I had the year before collected many hundreds

for the London charity-schools, I endeavored to plead their cause in the fields. The people threw in their mites most willingly; once or twice, I think, twenty-two pounds were collected in copper; the alms were accompanied with many prayers, and which, as I told them, laid, I am persuaded, a blessed foundation to the future charitable superstructure. In a short time, though plucked as it were out of the fire, the collections and charitable contributions amounted to more than a one thousand pounds sterling.

With that I reembarked, taking Philadelphia in my way, and upon my second arrival, found the spot fixed upon; but, alas! who can describe the low estate to which it was reduced! The whole country almost was left desolate, and the metropolis Savannah, was but like a cottage in a vineyard, or as a lodge in a garden of cucumbers. Many orphans, whose parents had been taken from them by the distresses that naturally attend new settlements, were dispersed here and there in a very forlorn helpless condition; my bowels yearned towards them, and, animated by the example of the great professor Franck, previous to bringing them here, I hired a house, furnished an infirmary, employed all that were capable of employment, and in a few weeks walked to the house of God with a large family of above sixty orphans, and others in as bad a condition.

On March 25, 1740, in full assurance of faith, I laid the foundation of this house; and in the year following, brought in my orphan family, who, with the workmen, now made up the number of one hundred and fifty. By the money which was expended on these, the remaining few were kept in the colony, and were enabled to pay the debts they owed; so that in a representation made to the House of Commons, by some, who for very good reasons wanted the constitution of the colony altered; they declared, that the very existence of the colony was in a great measure, if not totally, owing to the building and supporting of the Orphan House.

Finding the care of such a family, incompatible with the care due to a parish, upon giving previous warning to the then trustees, I gave up the living of Savannah, which without fee or reward I had voluntarily taken upon me. I then ranged through the northern colonies, and afterwards once more returned home. What calumny, what loads of reproach, I for many years was called to undergo, in thus turning beggars for a family, few here present need to be informed; a family, utterly unconnected by any ties of nature; a family, not only to be maintained with food, but clothed and educated also, and that too in the dearest part of his Majesty's dominions, on a pine barren, and in a colony where the use of Negroes was totally denied; this appeared so very improbable, that all beholders looked daily for its decline and annihilation.

But, blessed be God, the building advanced and flourished, and the wished-for period is now come, after having supported the family for thirty-two years, by a change of constitution and the smiles of government, with liberal donations from the northern, and especially the adjacent provinces, the same hands that laid the foundation, are now called to finish it, by making an addition of a seat of learning, the whole products and profits of which, are to go towards the increase of the fund, as at the beginning, for destitute orphans, or such youths as may be called of God to the sacred ministry of his Gospel. I need not call on any here, to cry, "Grace, grace, unto it." For on the utmost scrutiny of the intention of those employed, and considering the various exercises they have been called to undergo, and the opposition the building hath every where met with, we may justly say, "not by might, nor by power, but by thy Spirit, O Lord," hath this work been carried on thus far; it is his doing, let it be marvelous in our eyes. With humble gratitude, therefore, would we now set up our Ebenezer, and say, "Hitherto thou, Lord, hast helped us;" and wherefore should we doubt, but that he, who hath thus far helped, will continue to help, when the weary heads of the first founders and present helpers, are laid in the silent grave.

I am very well aware, what an invidious task it must be to a person in my circumstances, thus to speak on an affair in which he hath been so much concerned. Some may perhaps think, I am become a fool in thus glorying. But as I am now, blessed be God, in the decline of life, and as, in all probability, I shall never be present to celebrate another anniversary, I thought it best to be a little more explicit, that if I have spoken any thing but truth, I may be confronted; and if not, that future ages, and future successors, may see with what a purity of intention, and what various interpositions of Providence, the work was begun, and hath been carried on to its present height.

It was the reading of a like account, written by the late Professor Franck, that encouraged me. Who knows but hereafter, the reading something of a similar nature, may encourage others to begin and carry on a like work elsewhere? I have said its present height, for I would humbly hope, that this is, comparatively speaking, only a “day of small things,” only the dawn of brighter scenes. Private genius's and individuals, as well as collective bodies, have, like the human body, the nonage, puerile, juvenile estate, before they arrive at their zenith, and their lives as gradually they decline. But yet I would hope, that both the province and Bethesda, are but in their puerile or juvenile state. And long, long may they increase, and make large strides, till they arrive at a glorious zenith! I mean not merely in trade, merchandise, and opulence, (though I would be far from secluding them from the province, and would be thankful for the advances it hath already made) but a zenith of glorious gospel blessings, without which, all outward emoluments are less than nothing, or as the small dust of the balance: “For what shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world and lost his own soul.”

Who can imagine, that the prophet Zechariah would be sent to strengthen the hands of Zerubbabel, in building and laying the foundation of the temple, if that temple was not to be frequented with worshippers that worshipped the Father in spirit and truth. The most gaudy fabrics, stately temples, new moon Sabbaths, and

solemn assemblies, are only solemn mockeries God cannot away with. This God hath shown by the destruction of both the first and second temples. What is become of the seven churches of Asia? How are all their golden candlesticks overthrown? "God is a Spirit, and they who worship him must worship him in spirit and truth." And no longer do I expect that this house will flourish, than when the power of religion is encouraged and promoted, and the persons educated here, prosecute their studies, not only to be great scholars, but good saints.

Blessed be God! I can say with Professor Franck, that it is in a great measure owing to the disinterested spirit of my first fellow-helpers, as well as those who are now employed, that the building hath reached to its present height. This I am bound to speak, not only in honor to those who are now with God, but those at present before me. Nor dare I conclude, without offering to

Your Excellency, our pepper corn of acknowledgment for the countenance you have always shown Bethesda's institution, and the honor you did us last year, in laying the first brick of yonder wings: in thus doing, you have honored Bethesda's God. May he long delight to honor you here on earth! And after a life spent to his glory, and your country's good, may he honor you to all eternity, in placing you at Christ's right-hand in the kingdom above!

Next to your Excellency, my dear Mr. President, I must beg your acceptance both of thanks and congratulation on the annual return of this festival. For you were not only my dear familiar friend, and first fellow-traveler in this infant province; but you were directed by Providence to this spot, laid the second brick of this house, watched, prayed, and wrought for the family's good. A witness of innumerable trials, partner of my joys and griefs; you will have now the pleasure of seeing the Orphan-house a fruitful bough, its branches running over the wall. For this, no doubt, God hath smiled upon and blessed you, in a manner we could not expect, much less design; and may he continue to bless you with all spiritual blessings in

heavenly places in Christ Jesus. Look to the rock from whence you have been hewn, and may your children never be ashamed, that their father left his native country, and married a real Christian, born again under this roof. May Bethesda's Good grant this may be the happy portion of your children, and children's children!

Gentlemen of his Majesty's council,

Mr. Speaker, and you members of the General Assembly, many thanks are owing to you, for your late address to his Excellency in favor of Bethesda. Your joint recommendation of it, when I was last here, which, though in some measure through the bigotry of some, for the present is rendered abortive, by their wanting to have it confined to a party, yet I trust the event will prove that every thing shall be over-ruled to the furtherance of the work. Here I repeat, what I have often declared, that as far as lies in my power before and after my decease, Bethesda shall be always on a broad bottom. All denominations have freely given; all denominations, all the continent, God being my helper, shall receive benefit from it. May Bethesda's God bless you all! In your private as well as public capacity; and as you are honored to be the representatives of a now flourishing increasing people. May you be directed in all your ways! May truth, justice, religion, and piety be established amongst you through all generations!

Lastly, My reverend brethren, and you inhabitants of the colony, accept unfeigned thanks for the honor done me, in letting us see you at Bethesda this day. You, Sir, for the sermon preached here last year. Tell it in Germany, tell my great, good friend, Professor Franck, that Bethesda's God, is a God whose mercy endureth for ever. O let us have your earnest prayers! Encourage your people not to “despise the day of small things.” What hath God wrought? From its infancy, this colony hath been blessed with many faithful gospel ministers. O that this may be a

nursery to many more! This hath been the case of the New England College for almost a century, and why not the Orphan-house Academy at Georgia?

Men, brethren, fathers, as many of you, whether inhabitants or strangers, who have honored this day with your presence, give us the additional blessings of your prayers. And O that Bethesda's God may make this day, though but a day of small things, productive of great things to the souls of all amongst whom I have been now preaching the kingdom of God. A great and good day will it be indeed, if Jesus Christ, our great Zerubbabel, should, by the power of the eternal Spirit, bless any thing that hath now been said, to cause every mountain of difficulty, that lies in the way of your conversion, to become a plain. And what art thou, O great mountain, whether the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, or the pride of life, sin, or self-righteousness? Before our Bethesda's God, thou shalt become a plain.

Brethren, my heart is enlarged towards you. It is written, blessed be God that it is written, "In the name of Jesus every knee shall bow, whether things in heaven, or things in earth, or things under the earth." O that we may be made a willing people in the day of his power! Look, look unto him, all ye that are placed in these ends of the earth. This house hath often been an house of God, a gate of heaven, to some of your fathers. May it be a house of God, a gate of heaven, to the children also! Come unto him, all ye that are weary and heavy laden, he will give you rest; rest from the guilt, rest from the power, rest from the punishment of sin; rest from the fear of divine judgments here, rest with himself eternally hereafter. Fear not, though the beginnings are but small, Christ will not despise the day of small things. A bruised reed will he not break, and the smoking flax will he not quench, until he bring forth judgment unto victory. His hands that laid the foundation, also shall finish it. Yet a little while and the top-stone shall be brought forth with shouting, and men and angels join in crying "Grace! Grace! Unto it." That all present may be in this happy number, may God of his infinite mercy grant, through Jesus our Lord.