
Dr. *BUTLER*'s

Thanksgiving - Sermon,

AT THE

Cathedral Church of St. *PAUL*,

ON THE

Fifth of *NOVEMBER*, 1710.

Heathcote, Mayor.

Martis xiiii. die Novembris 1710.

Annoque R. Reginae ANNÆ

Magnæ Britannia, &c. Nonno.

THIS Court doth Desire the
Reverend Dr. BUTLER to
Print his SERMON Preached at
the Cathedral Church of *St. Paul*,
on *Sunday* the Fifth Instant, before
the Lord Mayor, Aldermen and
Citizens of this City.

Gibson.

A
S E R M O N

Preach'd before the

L O R D - M A Y O R,

A L D E R M E N,

A N D

C I T I Z E N S o f L O N D O N,

A T T H E

Cathedral - Church of *St. Paul,*

O N T H E

Fifth of November, 1710.

By *LILLY BUTLER, D. D.*
Minister of *St. Mary Aldermanbury.*

L O N D O N :

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against the *Royal Exchange*, in *Cornhill.* 1710.

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TO THE
RIGHT HONOURABLE
Sir Gilbert Heathcote,
L O R D - M A Y O R
O F T H E
C I T Y of L O N D O N,
A N D T H E
C O U R T of A L D E R M E N.

M Y L O R D,

IN Obedience to Your Command I
have Publish'd this Sermon. It
is a plain Discourse, but, I hope,
not unsuitable to the Occasion on which
it was Preached. It was design'd to
excite only those Affections, and to
bring

DEDICATION.

bring us to those Resolutions, which the Great Deliverances of that Day most evidently call for, and oblige us to. And all that I am concern'd for, in making it thus publick, is, That it may in some measure be serviceable to these Ends, which were sincerely intended by,

My LORD,

Your most humble Servant,

LILLY BUTLER.

1 Sam. xii. part of the[†] 23d. and 24th V.

----- *I will teach you the good and the right Way. Only fear the Lord, and serve him in Truth, with all your Heart : For consider how great things he hath done for you.*

WHEN Saul and his People were assembled together at Gilgal, to sacrifice Sacrifices of Peace-Offering before the Lord, and he and all the Men of Israel rejoiced greatly, c. 11. v. 15. on such a Day of Joy and Praise as this is; the Prophet Samuel address'd himself to all the Congregation, in that kind and seasonable Discourse contained in this Chapter. He reasoneth with them before the Lord, of all the Righteous Acts of the Lord, which he did to them and to their Fathers; c. 11. v. 7. He reminds them, v. 10. of their Ingratitude, and the Judgments it brought upon them, and of that happy Change of Affairs, v. 11. which had been always the Fruit of their crying and turning

turning unto God. He tells them, that notwithstanding all their Unkindness to him, he not only would *not cease to Pray for them*, v. 23. but would give them the best Advice and Directions he could, how they might secure to themselves a safe and prosperous State. *I will teach you*, saith he, *the good and the right way; Only fear the Lord, and serve him in Truth with all your Heart: For consider how great things he hath done for you.* In which Words, we have the Instruction of a Person of great Understanding, and long Experience in Publick Affairs; a *Man of God* too, a *Judge*, and a *Prophet in Israel*, concerning the Duty and Interest of a People, for whom God hath done great Things. They should consider these things, and be thereby moved to a sincere and hearty Obedience to the Laws of God, whose Doings they are.

In Discourfing therefore upon this Subject, I shall endeavour to shew,

First, What Consideration of the great things God hath done for us, is required of us.

Secondly

on the Fifth of November, 1710. 3

Secondly, How great the Mercies and Deliverances of this Day were, and therefore how worthy of such Consideration.

Thirdly, How our Minds should be affected with this Consideration.

Fourthly, That the Consideration of the great things God hath done for us, should effectually move us to a sincere and hearty Reformation and Obedience. And,

Fifthly, That this Reformation and Obedience is *the good and the right Way*, not only the Duty, but the Interest of a People, for whom God hath done great things.

First, I shall shew, What Consideration of the great things God hath done for us, is required of us.

We should carefully observe and take notice of the Divine Favours, search and enquire after them, that we may know and understand the *Loving-kindness of the Lord*: The Works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have Pleasure therein, Psal. 111. 2.

We should weigh and consider how great those things are, which God hath done for us; We should search into the Quality and Consequences

sequences of them, and examine all those Circumstances, which may give us a just Estimation of the Goodness and Mercy of God in them; that so we may be duly affected with the Sense of them, and raise our Thanksgivings to such a height as is, in some Measure, suitable to them.

We should frequently call these things into actual Remembrance, and exercise our Thoughts in the serious Meditation of them: We should renew in our Minds the Sense of former Benefits, and muse on these Works of God's Hand. And certainly we cannot employ our Thoughts upon any more worthy Object, than the Extraordinary Works of Almighty Power, Infinite Wisdom, and Immense Goodness; those Noble Acts of Providence, wherein the most Glorious Excellencies of the Divine Nature are most conspicuously display'd; and all this too for our Interest and Advantage. If we enquire what great things, in particular, God hath done for us of this Church and Nation, the Mercies of this Day are so very Signal, that they will presently offer themselves to our Thoughts. And a Particular and Affectionate

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nate Contemplation of these things, being the proper Work of this Day, and of this our Solemn Meeting; That our Minds may be possess'd with a worthy and becoming Sense of them, I proceed to shew,

Secondly, How great the Mercies and Deliverances of this Day were. We were delivered from all the dismal Effects of the most horrid and execrable Conspiracy that was ever form'd in Rome, or on this Side of Hell: The Thoughts whereof, is enough to make all but Devils tremble. How many most valuable Lives had been cut off at one Blow, in the most Barbarous and Savage Manner? What an Inundation of Foreign Tyranny and Oppression, of Slaughter and Persecution, of Superstition and Idolatry, had soon overspread the whole Land? How effectually had our Laws, and Liberties, and Religion, been buried in the Ruins of that House, in which they had been establish'd, if the dark and cruel Plot of this Day had taken Effect? But our good God, from whom even Hell it self hath no Covering, in a strange and wonderful Manner, brought to
B 2 Light

Light this hidden Work of Darkneſs, and confounded the Devices of the impious Undertakers, when they were juſt ready to perform their Enterprize. Our Soul eſcaped as a Bird out of the Snare of the Fowler: The Snare was broken, and we were delivered, Pf. 124. 7. And that we ſtill enjoy the Benefits of that Deliverance, our Happy Conſtitution, and our Reformed Religion: That our Perſons and Conſciences are not enſlaved to Popiſh Tyranny: That we have now a Queen upon the Throne, the Delight of our Eyes, and the Joy of our Hearts; a true Defender of our Faith, our Laws, and our Liberties; a Miniſter of God for good to all Her Subjects, attending continually upon this very thing; on whom God hath choſen to confer the Honour of happily Uniting the Two Kingdoms, after ſo many unſucceſſful Attempts of others; of triumphing in the moſt Glorious Succeſſes of Her Arms, againſt the Mighty Enemy and Oppreſſor, and ſtaining the Pride of all his Glory: And that we have comfortable Hopes, that the Valuable Bleſſings of this Reign will be preſerved in ſome Meaſure, to future Generations, by the Eſtabliſhing of the Proteſtant

cession: All these inestimable Benefits we owe to that other Gracious Dispensation of the Divine Providence we Commemorate this Day, and have thus express'd in our Thanksgivings to God, *The giving his late Majesty a safe Arrival here, and making all Opposition fall before him, till he became our King and Governor.*

I proceed now,

Thirdly, To shew how our Minds should be affected in the Performance of this Duty, with the Consideration of these great Things God hath done for us.

We should consider them with an high Esteem and Admiration of those Perfections of God, which shine forth in such noble Acts of his Providence. For God doth interpose, in this manner, on purpose to make himself a glorious Name, that he may be feared in the Assembly of his People, and had in Reverence of all that are about him. Our Souls should speak the Language of Moses and David upon like Occasions: Ex. 15. 11. *Who is like unto thee, O Lord, glorious in Holiness, fearful in Praises, doing*
Won-

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Wonders? Psal. 36. 7. How excellent is thy Loving-kindness, how precious are thy Thoughts towards us? Psal. 57. 10. 36. 9. Thy Mercy is great unto the Heavens, and thy Faithfulness reacheth unto the Clouds, Psal. 77. 13. 106. 2. Who is so great a God as our God? Who can utter his mighty Acts? Who can shew forth all his Praise? Our Hearts should be inflam'd with Love and Gratitude to our Liberal Benefactor, our Mighty Deliverer, the God of our Salvation, whilst we are considering the great Things he hath done for us. I will love thee, O Lord, my Strength, my Rock, and my Deliverer, saith David, Psal. 18. 1, 2. That the high and lofty One should be thus mindful of us, and set his heart upon us: That he should make us the Objects of so peculiar a Regard, and interest his Power, and Wisdom, and Providence, in so eminent and singular a manner, for the Safety and Happiness of a People so unworthy of his Care and Protection: How can we think of these things with cold and unaffected Hearts? How benumm'd and stupid must those Souls be, which are not warm'd with Love and Thankfulness, by such direct and glorious Rays of the Divine Favour?

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We should consider the great Things God hath done for us with Joy and Gladness. Thou, Lord, hast made me glad through thy work, and I will triumph in the works of thy hands, saith David, Ps. 52. 4. When we see such manifest Testimonies of God's particular Care of us, his Providence so gloriously Triumphant over the Malice and Insolence of them who hate us; the Interest of his Church so highly advanc'd, our Cause so signally espous'd by him; the secret Conspiracies of our Enemies so miraculously detected, and the wicked taken in the devices they have imagined: What Elevation of Mind, what Rapturous Joys become our Solemn Commemoration of these things, these great Things God hath done for us?

We should consider these things with a firm Trust, and a comfortable Reliance upon God, as able and ready to help us in all our Fears and Dangers. The Royal Psalmist thus expresseth himself in the Song he made in that Day, when the Lord had deliver'd him out of the hands of all his Enemies. The Lord is my Rock, and my Fortress, and my Deliverer, in whom I will trust.

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The happy Instances of this Day are most convincing Evidences, that the Providence of God watcheth over us; that He is mighty to save, and favourably inclin'd to succour us; that our Case can never be so desperate, but still there will be sufficient Help for us in our God, *who hath deliver'd us from so great a Death, and doth deliver; in him let us trust that he will deliver us.*

But though God's Hand be not short'ned that it cannot save, nor his Ear heavy that he cannot hear; yet our Iniquities may separate betwixt us and our God. We should therefore consider these things with firm Resolutions of turning from all our Transgressions, of *fearing God, and serving him in Truth, and with all our heart.* Which leads me to shew,

Fourthly, That the Consideration of the great Things God hath done for us, should effectually move us to a sincere and hearty Reformation and Obedience. This is the great End for which they were done, and the Consideration of them is very apt, in its own Nature, to produce this Effect.

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First, This is the great Design of God's Goodness, and the wonderful Works he hath wrought for us, to lead us unto Repentance, to draw us with these Cords of his Love to observe his Statutes, and to keep his Laws. I have loved thee with an everlasting love, saith God to his People Israel, Jer. 31. 3. therefore with loving-kindness have I drawn thee. He had been heaping Favours upon them from one Generation to another, that thereby he might draw them to himself, to love & serve him in Truth, & with all their heart. God can have no Self-interest to promote by us: Our Service cannot profit him, or make any addition to his most perfect Happiness: He makes our Reformation the End of his Dispensations, because it is our Interest and Advantage that we should be reform'd. And how great a Benefit must that be, which the Happy Deliverances of this Day were but Means of obtaining for us; that Reformation which God hath endeavour'd, by such Miracles of Power, and Wisdom, and Goodness, to oblige and persuade us to? Is it not then most shameful Guilt and Folly, to oppose and defeat the Designs of so tender and bountiful a Father, of such wonderful Instances of his Love?

Love? Is it not most provoking Iniquity with respect to God, and a foolish disregard to our own Good, thus to frustrate his kind Intentions, in all the *great Things he hath done for us?*

Secondly, The Consideration of these things is very apt, in its own Nature, to produce this Effect, to engage us to repent and turn to God. They plainly demonstrate to us the great Ingratitude of our Disobedience, and give us a most sensible Proof of those Divine Perfections, which most strongly invite us to serve, and deter us from offending him.

First, The *great Things* which God hath done for us, so plainly discover the Greatness of our Ingratitude, in continuing to dishonour and provoke him, that we must be extremely stupid, if we are not affected with Shame and Abhorrence, whenever we reflect upon it. Behold, and see, and consider how good and gracious God hath been to us. *What Nation hath had him so nigh unto them, in all that they call upon him for?* How safely have we been guarded by his watchful Care? How often hath he made bare his Powerful Arm for our Defence and Succor? What reasonable Discoveries hath he made of the bloody Conspiracies

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of our Enemies? How many pernicious Enterprizes levell'd against us, hath he brought to nought? How often hath he disappointed our Fears, prevented our Wishes, and exceeded our Expectations, in *the great Things he hath done for us?* This is He, this good and gracious God, the Obligations of whose Love and Goodness have been so great and numerous; This is He against whom we have sinned. Can we then forbear to loath our selves, in our own sight, for the vile Ingratitude that is in all our Abominations? Can we endure the Thoughts of persisting in it, of continuing *thus to requite the Lord?* Shall we still render nothing but Evil for so much Good? God forbid!

Secondly, By the *great Things God hath done for us,* we are sensibly taught, how much it is for our Interest to please God, and to keep him still our Friend. He who wrought the Deliverances of this Day, What is He not able to do for us? What Conspiracies can be concealed from him? What Counsel or Force can stand against him? How safe must we be under his Protection, how victorious with his Aid, how prosperous with his Blessing, and how happy in his Love?

Thirdly, The great Things God hath done for us, do plainly demonstrate to us, how dangerous a thing it is to make this God our Enemy. What a dreadful thing must it be, to have all that Power and Wisdom he hath manifested in our Preservation and Deliverance, turned and employed against us? What a mad and desperate thing must it be to provoke this God to jealousy; this God, who hath shewed how mighty He is to punish, by the mighty Power He hath shewed in our Protection and Defence, and what a fearful thing it is to fall into his hands, by the Destruction He hath brought upon our Enemies? Thus we see how genuine and proper Effects, Repentance and Reformation are, of the Consideration of the great Things God hath done for us: How unexcusable then must we be, if we obstinately persist in our wicked Ways, after God hath used such kind and prevailing Means to reclaim us? Let us therefore at length be persuaded, by the Mercies of God, to present our Bodies a living Sacrifice, holy and acceptable unto God, which is our so reasonable Service, so reasonable a Fruit of this Day's Meditations. We have often profess'd to consider the great Deliverances of this Day. We have yearly Assembled in the House

of God, in pretence of making our Thankful Acknowledgments for them. But alas! How little have these, or the many other Signal Favours of God to this Church and Nation, been able to prevail with us, to serve the great and gracious Author of them? Is not Infidelity avowed, our Holy Religion ridiculed, the Name of God prophaned, and Immorality of all sorts practiced, as much and as openly as ever? What Duty to God or Man is not daily violated for the carrying on our selfish Designs, and promoting our Party-Interests? And what more visible Fruit have we brought forth, under all the obliging Dispensations of the Providence of God towards us, than a shameful Increase of all manner of *Filthiness both of the Flesh and Spirit*, of every thing which is contrary to that *pure and peaceable Religion*, which hath been so wonderfully preserved to us? *O Jerusalem, wilt thou not be made clean? When shall it once be? When, O when will the happy Time come, of rendering unto God according to all the benefits he hath done unto us?* We are once more Assembled on this Joyful Day, the Day of our Great Deliverances, to praise our Great Deliverer: Let not our Gratitude end

with

with this Day, or spend it self in the *Sacrifices of our Lips* only, but survive and manifest it self in *giving up our selves to his service, and walking before him in Holiness and Righteousness all our Days.* For the enforcing this Exhortation, I proceed to shew,

Fifthly, That this Reformation and Obedience is *the good and the right way*; not only the Duty, but the Interest of a People, for whom God hath done great Things.

First, This is the most Effectual Means of securing to us all the happy Fruits of the great Deliverances of this Day. We need not fear that God should deprive us of them, when we improve them to those Ends for which they were bestow'd upon us; and heartily engage in his Service, who hath hitherto preserv'd them to us. He who hath continu'd them thus long, to oblige us to reform, would not suffer them to be taken from us when we had reformed. He who hath kept up the Wall of his Vineyard, when it brought forth nothing but *wild Grapes*, would not lay it open, or suffer it to be trodden down, when it brought forth Fruit worthy of his Care and Husbandry.

Secondly,

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Secondly, This would be a sure means of procuring for us more and greater Blessings from God ; to multiply the Miracles of his Mercy, and to obtain what is still wanting to compleat our Happiness. A *holy Nation* would certainly be a *peculiar People* unto God, a special Object of his Care and Blessing ; For the Eyes of the Lord run to and fro, throughout the whole Earth, to shew himself strong in the behalf of them whose heart is perfect towards him, and he takes pleasure in their prosperity, 2 Chron. 16.9. What might we not hope from him, if we were but careful to answer the Ends of all his kind Dispensations, and to abound in every Good Work, as his Grace and Goodness abounds towards us? He who hath done so great Things for us, whilst we continu'd our Disobedience and Rebellion, how certainly would he enlarge his Bounty augment his Favours, and rejoice over us to do us more and greater Good, if we would but come in, and lay down our Arms, and serve him in Truth, and with all our heart? O that thou hadst hearkened to my Commandments! saith God to Israel, Isa. 48. 18. then had thy Peace been as a River, a perpetual Stream of Prosperity had flowed in upon them ; O that my People had walked in

my ways! I should soon have subdued their Enemies, Psal. 81. 14. then there had been no delay to their Peace and Triumphs.

The Almighty seems to speak, as if he could not make his People so happy as he wish'd they might be, because they would not be persuaded to amend their Doings. His Power was retrained and limited, in working for the good of a sinful People, by his Wisdom and Justice. Instead then of Murmuring at our Disappointments, complaining of our Burdens, repining at any Delay is given to our forward Expectations, or censuring the Conduct of those who watch and fight for us; let us every one turn from our evil ways: For these are the things which hide the Face of God from us, and hold back the saving Strength of that Right Hand, which is always ready to interpose for the Safety and Happiness of a Reformed People.

Thirdly, Without this, the Mercies and Deliverances we have received, will but ripen our Sins, and hasten our Ruin. You only have I known, of all the Families of the Earth, saith God to his People Israel, Amos 3. 2. therefore will I punish you for all your Iniquities. The Mercies
and

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and Bounty of God to a People, are the greatest and most provoking Aggravation of their Disobedience: *I have nourished and brought up Children, and they have rebelled against me,* Isa. 1. 2. *Hear, O Heavens, and give Ear, O Earth.* This was such an Aggravation of their Sin, as God himself expresseth in terms of Wonder and Astonishment. If therefore we resolve to continue the same Sinful People that ever we were, we may justly tremble to think of *the great Things God hath done for us.* For every one of these advanceth our Account, and exalts the Cry of our Sins to Heaven for Vengeance. Can we think that God will always strive with us by Mercy and Love to no purpose? That he will not at length vindicate the Honour of his Abused Goodness by the severe Executions of his Wrath and Justice; and make his Providence as Signal in our future Punishments, as it hath been in our past Deliverances? *If ye still do wickedly, saith Samuel to that Peop'le, for whom God had done such great Things; ye shall be destroyed, both ye & your King.* If we still break the Commandments of God, after God hath given us such Deliverance as this; would he not be angry with us, till he had consumed us, so that there should be no Remnant nor escaping?

ping? Ezra 9. 13. 4. How reasonably may we expect to be cut down for our Barrenness, if, after so many Years, God shall still come seeking fruit, and find none; altho' he hath planted us under the warmest Influence, and watered us with the most seasonable and refreshing Showers of his Divine Favour? If then we have any real Value for those Temporal and Spiritual Advantages we enjoy, and for that precious Life in which so many publick Blessings are comprehended. If we desire to be eased of our Burdens, to see Trade and Credit revive, and to Triumph still more and more in the Conquest of our Enemies, till we obtain a safe, a long and honourable Peace. If, on the other side, we dread the falling into the hands of God, or, which David thought more terrible, into the hands of Idolatrous and Cruel Men; then let us fear God, and serve him in Truth, and with all our heart. And how small a thing is this, for the securing such inestimable Blessings, and the preventing such intolerable Evils? Only fear the Lord, saith Samuel, and serve him in Truth with all your heart. It is Only this; this is all that God requires of us; and how reasonable a Condition is it, especially if we consider

sider our Obligations to perform it from the *great Things God hath done for us?* Some of these we are met together at this time, to Commemorate with Praise and Blessing. Let us then, before we go hence, make some Resolutions, becoming the Presence we are in, and the Work we are about, the Solemnities and Obligations of this Day, our great Deliverances, and our great Deliverer. Let us every one resolve *to put away the Evil of our doings,* and to improve our Power and Opportunities, every thing which may conduce to this End, to the bringing over as many as we can to joyn with us in the Service of God, who *hath done so great Things for us.* Were we but as earnest in our Endeavours to appease the Wrath of God, as we seem to be to provoke one another; As zealously affected to the Common Interest of Religion, as we are to that of those several Parties we have most unreasonably and unchristianly divided our selves into: Would we but labour to Reform our selves and others, with the same Life and Vigor, with which we pursue the base Designs of Covetousness and Ambition, of Hatred and Revenge; Had we no Contention about
any

any thing else, but who should do most for the Honour of God, and the Advancement of Real Piety and Virtue: Then we might comfortably hope, that God would be Merciful unto us, and bless us, and make us a Praise in the Earth: That we might see Jerusalem in Prosperity all our Days, and Peace upon Israel. And having thus finished our Course, in serving God and our Generation, might cheerfully resign our Souls into the Hands of God, as into the Hands of a Faithful and Merciful Creator, who hath prepared for them that love him, such great and glorious Things, as Eye hath not seen, nor Ear heard, nor have enter'd into the Heart of Man; an Inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, unspeakable and endless Joys, reserved in Heaven for them.

F I N I S.