

# SERMON

Preached by the Reverend  
Mr ALEXANDER HENDERSON

Before the fitting

of

GENERAL ASSEMBLY

Began the 12. of August 1763

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## P R E F A C E.

**W**E have now found an acceſſe to the Throne of Grace, and I pray God that theſe that are aſſembled here together to get this work crowned, may firſt labour to get theſe two things removed; Firſt, The conſcience of our guiltineſſ, alas! there are none that diſcerns or conſiders their ſins, one thing ſhould move our hearts that the Commons of the Land are ſo ignorant that they know no God; and from that proceeds ſuch wickedneſſ. If that Paſtors had been more diligent in inſtructing, this Church had had a better face ere now. Secondly, Our weakneſſ ſtays as a mountain, and we cannot climb unleſſ we be helped, there is no remedie but the brightneſſ of his mercy that he would diſſipate theſe clouds, and no remedie for our vveakneſſ but the Pouver of his might let us therefore beg the ſame in the Name of JESUS.

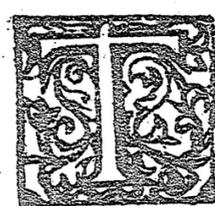
## T E X T.

ACTS Chap. V. 32. to the end.

When they heard that they were cut to the heart, and took counſel to ſlay them.

Then ſtood there up one in the Counſel, a Phariſee, named Gamaliel, a Doctour of Law, had in reputation among all the People, and commanded to put the Apoſtles forth a little ſpace.

And ſaid unto them, ye men of Iſrael, take heed to your ſelves, what ye intend to do as touching theſe men, &c.



**H**E Words that were ſpoken by Peter and the other Apoſtles could give no juſt Cauſe of Provocation to the Adverſaries, for in their Doctrines they inſiſted upon two innocent Points; One was faith in Chriſt, that ſince the Lord whom they crucified was now exalted to be a Prince that therefore they might believe in him, and get Remiſſion of Sins, and the other was Obedience, they ought to obey God rather than men; yet they reſolved to kill

A 2

them

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them, and had done so, if the Lord had not raised up a man to save them, and he prevailed that their fury was layed, wherein the Apostles rejoiced and doubled their Zeal.

*There are 4. particulars in the Text very considerable.*

1. *The bad affects the Apostles preaching had upon the peoples hearts.*
2. *The mean that God did use in Saveing of his Servants.*
3. *The unjust proceedings of the Adversaries.*
4. *The Disposition and Diligences of the Apostles that ceased not; whereby you may learne that often times it comes to passe that men in Authority are provoked against Religion, whither in Obedience to God, or in the tryal of their faith yet the Lord has many wayes to save his owne Children, and the end shall be joy to the Saints and Advancement to the Gospell.*

Let us returne to the first, which was the bad effects of the preaching, and that was twofold, one in their hearts, another in their heads, they were cut to the heart, the Word is borrowed from the cutting of a Sword or Saw, in the 7. Acts, it is said they gashed

with their teeth, and Acts 2. 37. it is said they were pricked in their hearts, we finde another effect, but it is different, the one and the other are very like; Rom. 11. v. 8. he calls the Spirit of Slumber the Spirit of compunction, the Godly have a pricking and your wicked have a pricking, as in that place, Acts 2, 37. they were pricked and tooke Counsel, but they go to them that wounded them, but they do not so here, but would slay them.

The Word of God has very different effects in the Godly, and the wicked, Rev. 1:16. it is like a twoedged Sword, and Heb. 4. lively and weighty in Operation it either pricks or cuts, it is either a Word to cure thee or to kill thee. The Ministers of Christ although they be otherwayes of no Reputation, yet if they could handle this Sword a right it should wound; the children of God when they are wounded should bear it patiently, they are wounded because of their Sins, the other because they cannot commit Sin. So the one prepares for Christ, the other for Destruction, the one shall end in health the other in wo, and may seem very Strange that all this tyme we should never have heard a Word or Letter from our Prelats, that have been wounded with the word; Men and Brethren I will not insist upon their guiltines, for we can say no more

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of them then the Text sayes. And they toke  
counsell to slay them, and now we come to the  
Counsell, they resolved to slay them, Coun-  
sell is good and excellent neither hath it been  
derogatory to Authority for as Solomon sayes  
in Counsell there is stability, these matters that  
are not agitated by Counsell are tossed upon fancy,  
as Solomon felt the benefite of using it; 1. be-  
cause it was young. 2. Because it was violent  
consider the Counsell of our Adversaries, it  
was very violent but it had not the other fo-  
the men wanted not their years, yet they had  
this violence, and they had another bad qua-  
lity to Supply that, and this ye may Learn  
from the 17. Verse, many of them were Saddu-  
ces and so unmeet to be Counsellors, for in Act  
23. you see they beleve not a Resurrection  
and when such unbelievers are Counsellors  
their Sentence will be to cut the throat of  
Church an Common Wealth, they care not  
what violence they use to get preferment but  
especially Kirkmen that are Sadduces who  
cruelty shall be exercised by them, but espe-  
cially when they are given over to the Devil  
Ministers when they fall are like Angels that are  
Devils, no men in the Scripture are called  
Devils but Ministers so they become incarnate  
Devils, give God thanks (and his Majesty  
that his given us this day to meet together at

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no thanks to them that either you are hearing,  
or that and I am preaching to you.

Followes the mean the second thing, which  
was the man that spake and his Speech, the  
man was a Pharisee, he was Learned and a  
Doctor of Divinity, for his good parts of re-  
putation naturally and Politickly wise, and  
upon such grounds he convinces them all, and  
further he seems to be a Peaceable man and  
does what he can to save innocent blood but  
there was one thing wanting, Faith in Christ,  
and love to his word. Act. 22. It is said, Paul  
was brought up at the feet of Gamaliel, as was  
his Schollar so was his Master, he was igno-  
rant and so a persecuter, there is more requi-  
red for accomplishment of a man then the gifts  
of the minde, which this man seems to have, a  
mans natural parts are like a vesture of gold, &  
the gifts of grace like precious stones, but this  
faith is like a precious Diamond in the middle,  
incomparably greater in worth. judge of things  
according to their quality the best of these be-  
side the great jewel are given to the wicked  
and the godly and are bestowed on them for  
other mens good and not their owne but this  
is proper to thy self and for thy self and this  
jewel shall make the rich and it concerns non-  
more then Ministers it is required of Ministers  
that they should be Learned and in reputation  
with

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with the people, wise, peaceably disposed to imitate and what he wants let us Labour  
and Learned *Advocates* altho they cannot come to have our Souls filled with the love of Christ  
to Eminent yet competent knowledge. *It is* and think more of grace than of Learning. Be-  
to exhort and comfort and convince the enfore I come to his Speech, see not only Gods  
my not like these men that have sheares and mercies but also Gods Providences which his  
tubs to cut of the woul and carry, their mi wisdom had designed and there or two peices  
away but no care to feed them, I say the of his Providence here seen one was the Lord  
should be furnished with all things both brought them back from the gates of death when  
wardly and outwardly, and it is a pity that their soul as it were was in their hand; the other  
have not a Lebanon for trees to grow in, by such a mean as they could not dream of, and  
Professor here & a Professor there all the plant these two are very ordinarie with the Lord when  
ing will Soon be destroyed if there be not you are in extremity he shewes himself and in  
place for them, we are all crying for good Much wayes, and we may truly say that he hath  
nisters, have a care of the good plants that done so with us, that when Episcopacy was  
not Learning to read a Sermon and to Spill it deeply rooted even then God would cut them  
the telling it is a pity that these that boast should none. *Quest: Wherefor doth the Lord so.*  
should be so vaine, and als great a pity that we. *Answer for 3 reasons, 1 that when the Lord*  
have not sound Divinity, many get other mentomes in Exstremity that his hand may be dis-  
preachings and these that are Learned should etned and he get the gre ater glory, *Isaiab, 33,*  
be given to such alterations, yet altho thou *1.9. Lebanon is ashamed and cut doune. 2. For*  
wert als Learned als Gamaliel if thou have not the further confusion of the enemies. *Obad. 3.*  
more, thou art not meet to be a Minister *Whose habitation is in the high rocks who say-*  
Christ, you know what intertainment the *As in their hearts who shall bring me doune to*  
postles got at Athens, they mocked them, *the ground. 3 For our encouragement & our Po-*  
man that his a Learned head and a graceless terity after us, that we should only put our con-  
heart is not fitt for Christs work let us joyne dence in him who is only able to help us.  
both together of all men that ever I was ac Now we come to the speech it self, wherein  
quainted with, I saw none so profane as Min take notice of his intention, to *Restraine* he  
sters, what was good in this man, let us stri as a wise man and knew no good would fol-  
low.

low, if they were harmed he knew the Roman  
 would be angry, and that the people had  
 good likeing to them, this was a good and  
 agreeable intention, tho not a pure and pious  
 if he had had any aime to Gods glory and  
 the Gospel of Christ it had been good; I make  
 no question, there are many among us, that  
 have peaceable desires and Laudible intentions,  
 but more is required, let us labour to  
 have pious intentions, not only to have the  
 present troubles settled, it shall soon break  
 forth again, see what is agreeable to his will  
*Iste est malus, qui sua causa bonus*, he is bad  
 that is good only for himself, let us beseech the  
 Lord that we may have hearts to seek his hon-  
 our and the enlargement of Christs Kingdom.

Now for his argument, I would have you  
 refrain from these men, if it be of God,  
 will come to pass; this Argument had its own  
 weakness; if it be of men it should be hindered  
 if of God it should have be enforwarded the things  
 should put them to tryal; we will not passe what  
 is commendable in him, he proceeds on a good  
 ground, if of men, to be rejected; If of God;  
 be received *Mat: 21. 25*. The Baptisme of Job  
 was it from heaven or of men. *Ephes: 4*. The  
 the Spirits whether they be of men or God  
 it was the perpetuall doctrine of the Prophet  
*Thus saith the Lord*, and Paul saith, the  
 which

which I received do I deliver; they that are  
 principles, must be Beleevers, not what man  
 with; First that it is true in matters internall  
 not in matters external. Moses when he  
 appointed to build the Tabernacle, he gets  
 his directions: Solomon when he built the  
 temple had his warrand from David; and lest  
 they think Solomons warrand not to be suffici-  
 ent, Ezekiah had his warrand according to  
 the commandment of David. O but you will  
 say, it is not so in the New Testament, there  
 are not so many ceremonies; it is a pitifull  
 thing, we will not acknowledge that which  
 we are ignorant of; distinguish betwixt multi-  
 tude and number of ceremonies, they had ma-  
 ny we have fewer, shall we think, we have  
 not so great light, as these who were to put an  
 aspersion on Christ, let us strive to learne  
 what Gods will is, when it is of God receive  
 it, but when of men reject it. Many ceremo-  
 nies have exercised the Church of God many  
 times and especially that of the Government  
 of the Church, and there are two causes that  
 hinder the decideing of it. 1. The hudge jud-  
 gement of God upon the congregations, and  
 who puts Gods Servants to tryal. 2. Cause is  
 the avarice of Churchmen, so long as their a-  
 varice lasts there is no end of Episcopacy. 3.  
 Because we do not examine, what kinde of  
 Govern-

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Government Christ gave, the Question brought in two instances to prove that the  
Government is not *Juris* but *facti*. V. Work of man will come to nought, one of Theu-  
Is that agreeable with reason and civil Govern- he was one that conceived himself to be a  
ment, No, but *de facto*, what Governm phet but a false one: and Judas he would have  
Christ hath established, an office that is *de facto* waded the people from giving that duty to  
*Divino* should be established, but if it be a civill Magistrat that they ought to have  
office of man it ought to be rejected. The, and there were Sects that followed them;  
great Doctor teaches us that when God fight errors of Religion commonly springey-  
against man he shall prevaile, but when Ma from the Spirit of Theudas, which is a Spi-  
fights against God, they shall be found fight of fantasie, or from the other and that is a  
against him, *Gen. 11*. The builders of Babel rit of rebellion and that is not of God.  
the Lord made every one of them that the Consider altho they be the many yet there  
knew not what another said, this was an ea morelikewayes as there are Spirits contraire  
thing to the Lord, and so the work was inte the Spirit of Theudas, and this is your Spi-  
rupted in building: The Lord is wonderfull of Pharaoh, who said who is the Lord that  
building, and can bring downe Babel, great I should serve him, and that is Atheisme,  
opposition was, made against Joseph by another is contrarie to Judas & that is Herods,  
Brethren, and great opposition against Davit runs to flattery, an gives man that, that  
yet Gods counsell behoved to stand, what obtains to God.  
position was made against Gods people in As Atheisme is an abomination before God,  
gypt in bringing them out of Egypt yet the is Rebellion and flatery the true reformed  
behoved to come forth: and you know in yo lligion abhorres disobedience, and gives to  
propagation of the Gospel and the work of r far that which is Cæsars, and sure we pro-  
formation, and because many his opposed e a harmeles Religion. I would exhort you  
yet it hath gone through. And you know two things, first to the course of faith which  
great opposition is been used against this wor ores godlesness and vaine conceits of men  
by the wicked, but yet blessed be God it has am now pleading for the innocency of  
proclamed it self through the Land. lligion) ye know what our adversaries have  
Hunted against us, that we are gnilty of many  
crimes

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crimes and tricks, and that we have made  
ople to feigne themselves inspired with  
Spirit of divination, which is against  
Truth. The second thing is the course of  
bedience there was never a greater friend  
Kings then Christ, there is no question  
about Judas of Galilee his part, whether  
should pay tax or not nether of that in war  
verence to Princes or that respect we carry  
him, I wish his owne prayers were never  
that doth not heartily pray for his Maje  
but the Question is what is his part in Reli  
and matters Ecclesiastick, it is both said  
printed that I should have spoken much,  
my fellow Brethren (the rest of the Cove  
ters) would not allow of that I said and say  
regall inspection belongs to Kings over Ch  
matters, and that the King was Supreme  
op over all this Kingdom, now my adv  
ries think I have made him a Churchman,  
ignorant but not so, as for the head of  
Church we acknowledge none but Christ  
for the other *Episcopus* is a name that  
well proper to a civill Magistrat as to a  
tual, therefore Constantine sayth, *Vos*  
*Episcopi intra, ego extra.* Next that  
*Custos utriusque Tabule*, Vindication be  
unto him, who carries the Sword of San  
and coercion, and Convocation of Syn

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now this present Generall Assembly is con-  
ened & as he conveens so he should examine  
Gem, if he finde any thing against the Word  
God he should reject it, thus I speak not of  
negative voice his Majestie hath.  
And now I have showne the particulars I  
ve been taxed upon, hoping this honou-  
ble Assembly, will further consider of it and  
now I come to speak one word to your Com-  
missioners Grace who represents his Majestie.  
As for your Grace his Majesties Commissio-  
er we beseech you to see that Cæsar have his  
owne, but let not Cæsar have what is due to  
God, and belongs to him, God has exalted  
our Grace to many high places within these  
w years, and more especially now, be thank-  
ful and labour to exalt Christs Throne, some  
be exalted like Haman and some like Mor-  
decai.  
I pray God these good parts the Lord hath  
endowed you with you may use them a right,  
as the Israelites when they came out of Egypt  
did give all their Silver and Gold for building  
of the Tabernacle, I tell your Gr: ye must be  
accountable for all your actions especially in  
these publick busineses.  
And to you right honourable and right Wor-  
shipfull Members of this Assembly, go on in  
your Zeal constantly, it is not true Zeal that  
growes

is  
growes cold, but the nearer it is the end it  
be the hotter if it shall please God that by  
hands the light of the Gospel shall be contin  
Surely it shall be a refreshment to you and  
children that you should have lived when  
light of the Gospel was almost extinguished  
now to see it quickned again after all  
Troubles. With a holy Moderation go on  
Zeal is a good Servant but an ill Master,  
a ship that has a full saile and wants a rudder.

We have need of Christian prudence  
we know what ill speeches our adversaries  
made upon us let it be seen to his Majestic  
this Government can very well stand with  
Monarchiall Government, hereby we shall  
gain his Majesties favour and God shall get  
Glory to whom be praise for ever and ever  
Amen.

FINIS.