

he had to suffer the wrath of God. It was their hour, because it was the hour appointed in the counsels of God himself for the accomplishment of man's redemption. It was the power of darkness, when Satan, and the powers of darkness, sought to overcome his steadfastness, to tempt his soul, to make him renounce his work, and so baffle his enterprise. It was their hour, and therefore he permitted them to lay hold on him, and they led him away to Caiaphas the High Priest, with whom the scribes and the elders were assembled.

At this moment all the disciples forsook him and fled. How touching this circumstance! By one he had been betrayed—by another he was to be denied—now he was forsaken by all. This was the hour spoken of by Christ, when they were to be scattered every man to his own, and were to leave him alone:—alone in the hands of his enemies. It is sad in many circumstances to be left alone. Christ was now alone: of the people there were none with him; while he was about to endure the wrath of God, and the cruel death of the cross. To be deserted by friends especially is a calamity of all others the greatest. This was now the situation of Christ. He was alone, in the power of his enemies. And yet he was not alone: the Father was with him. Still God was with him. The time was coming when even he should forsake him, when he was to exclaim in the bitterness of his soul, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?" And then should Christ be indeed alone, alone in the universe, the great sacrifice, the great propitiation:—at once the High Priest, the altar, and the victim!

Verse 58. Peter followed him afar off. "Where was his courage now? Where was his daring now? "Though all men shall be offended because of thee, yet will I never be offended". Never! Now he is offended surely when he follows Christ only afar off, when he will not boldly stand by him and defend him. And it is curiosity merely it appears, that leads him to follow him even a far off. It was merely to see the end—to see what these things would lead to. He "went in, and sat with the servants to see the end." A most unworthy motive truly. How many unworthy motives may actuate the professed followers of Jesus! Let us look to our motives even when we may be embarked in a worthy cause. Let it not merely be to see the end. Let it be to accomplish the end, though it may even

be connected with disaster and defeat. — In this defeat there may be often the greatest victory.

Verse 59-68. They were resolved by all means to accomplish Christ's death, and they would suborn false witnesses rather than suffer him to escape. But they found none. It was with difficulty they could obtain any: At last came two false witnesses. A false cause is often supported by the appearance of evidence rather than by evidence itself. Heaven and earth are moved in this instance to obtain evidence that will be satisfactory, and it is last but the most paltry evidence that is obtained, and that is held enough. We are told, "At last came two false witnesses, And said, This fellow said, I am able to destroy the temple of God, and to build it in three days".—That was a remarkable scene which passed between the High Priest and Christ. Think of the High Priest sitting in judgment upon Him of whom he was the type. He was the High Priest according to the law of a carnal commandment—Christ according to the power of an endless life. He was the High Priest which had infirmity: Christ, the son who is consecrated for evermore. The son of God arraigned before a mortal like ourselves, made to answer for his life!—But hear that solemn announcement, which ought to have struck the High Priest with fear, and thrilled his inmost soul: "Hereafter shall ye see the son of man sitting on the right hand of power, and coming in the clouds of Heaven". That is a sight which we shall all witness. We shall see Christ at the right hand of God, and coming in the clouds of heaven. Now he is the accused—then he will be the Judge. Now he is at the bar of another: then we shall stand at his bar. This is his hour of humiliation: that will be his hour of exaltation. He will be then higher than the highest—the fellow of God! How solemn the thought of Christ's coming, and that we must all stand at his judgment seat! "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, and give account to him of the deeds done in the body whether good or bad". Aye, and that High Priest will be there, who now rent his clothes and said: "He hath spoken blasphemy". Will it be to receive the sentence of damnation as he now pronounced it upon Christ?—Perhaps he will be among the redeemed on that day—among those who will be acquitted at the bar of God, having embraced the merits of Christ. Although he condemned Christ, Christ may acquit