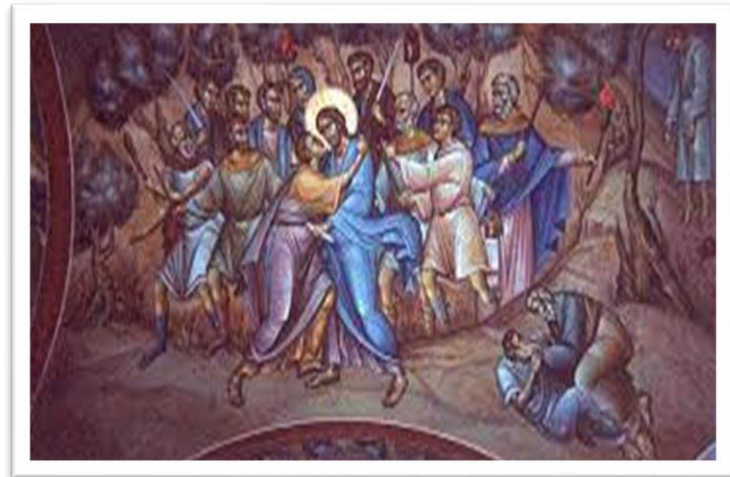


## Means employed by the enemies of Jesus

for carrying out their designs against him. No sooner was Jesus arrested than Annas and Caiphas were informed, and instantly began to arrange their plans with regard to the course to be pursued. Confusion speedily reigned everywhere—the rooms were lighted up in haste, guards placed at the entrances, and messengers dispatched



to different parts of the town to convoke the members of the Council, the scribes, and all who were to take a part in the trial. Many among them had, however, assembled at the house of Caiphas as soon as the treacherous compact with Judas was completed, and had remained there to await the course of events. The different classes of ancients were likewise assembled, and as the Pharisees, Sadducees, and Herodians were congregated in Jerusalem from all parts of the country for the celebration of the festival, and had long been concerting measures with the Council for the arrest of our Lord, the High Priests now sent for those whom they knew to be the most bitterly opposed to Jesus, and desired them to assemble the witnesses, gather together every possible proof, and bring all before the Council. The proud Sadducees of Nazareth, of Capharnaum, of Thirza, of Gabara, of Jotapata, and of Silo, whom Jesus had so often reproved before the people, were actually dying for revenge. They hastened to all the inns to seek out those persons whom they knew to be enemies of our Lord, and offered them bribes in order to secure their appearance. But, with the exception of a few ridiculous calumnies, which were certain to be disproved as soon as investigated, nothing tangible could be brought forward against Jesus, excepting, indeed, those foolish accusations which he had so often refuted in the synagogue. The enemies of Jesus hastened, however, to the tribunal of Caiphas, escorted by the scribes and Pharisees of Jerusalem, and accompanied by many of those merchants whom our Lord drove out of the Temple when they were holding market there; as also by the proud doctors whom he had silenced before all the people, and even by some who could not forgive the humiliation of being convicted of error when he disputed with them in the Temple at the age of twelve. There was likewise a large body of impenitent sinners whom he

had refused to cure, relapsed sinners whose diseases had returned, worldly young men whom he would not receive as disciples, avaricious persons whom he had enraged by causing the money which they had been in hopes of possessing to be distributed in alms. Others there were whose friends he had cured, and who had thus been disappointed in their expectations of inheriting property; debauchees whose victims he had converted; and many despicable characters who made their fortunes by flattering and fostering the vices of the great. All these emissaries of Satan were overflowing with rage against everything holy, and consequently with an indescribable hatred of the Holy of Holies. They were farther incited by the enemies of our Lord, and therefore assembled in crowds round the palace of Caiphas, to bring forward all their false accusations and to endeavour to cover with infamy that spotless Lamb, who took upon himself the sins of the world, and accepted the burden in order to reconcile man with God. Whilst all these wicked beings were busily consulting as to what was best to be done, anguish and anxiety filled the hearts of the friends of Jesus, for they were ignorant of the mystery which was about to be accomplished, and they wandered about, sighing, and listening to every different opinion. Each word they uttered gave raise to feelings of suspicion on the part of those who they addressed, and if they were silent, their silence was set down as wrong. Many well-meaning but weak and undecided characters yielded to temptation, were scandalised, and lost their fait; indeed, the number of those who persevered was very small indeed. Things were the same then as they oftentimes are now, persons were willing to serve God if they met with no opposition from their fellow creatures, but were ashamed of the Cross if held in contempt by others. The hearts of some were, however, touched by the patience displayed by our Lord in the midst of his sufferings, and they walked away silent and sad.