

So bold and uncompromising an innovator could not be *tolerated* ; — he must either be received as the Lord of all, “ come to his own,” or he must be sacrificed, even though innocent of moral wrong, — to avoid the political evil which his preaching was likely to produce. The Jewish Rulers chose the latter course ; and like all who imagine that public acts are exempted from the rules of right and wrong which regulate private life, they suffered a bitter penalty for their condemnation of One whom at any rate they knew to be an innocent man ; and in whom, if they could for a moment have forgotten their prejudices, they might have seen something more than a mere man. Had they listened to the peaceful doctrines of the gospel, the fatal insurrections which drew upon them the Roman arms would never have occurred ; the nation would not have been dispersed ; and Mount Zion might still have been “ the glory of all lands :” the centre from which the light of the gospel, would have radiated into the whole world.

The dreaded teacher was at length put to death : his few disciples concealed themselves in grief and terror, and the sect was apparently crushed : — but suddenly they re-appear, boldly proclaiming the message which they had been charged with by their Lord ; — endued by him with the like supernatural powers. And now their converts are reckoned by thousands, and again the Rulers of the Jews tremble for their authority, and take Peter and John into custody. The same notions which led to the sacrifice of Jesus evidently actuate them on this occasion : they do not doubt the miracle, but they suspect magic : — “ By what power or what name have ye done this ?” is the question : and when these “ unlearned and ignorant