

But to see how much the Incarnate Son of God *suffered* during his sojourn upon earth, we must follow him to the closing hours of his mortal career; when, in anticipation of the horrors that awaited him, *he sweated as it were great drops of blood*—when, on being apprehended by a ruffian band armed with swords and staves as against a thief, he was dragged to the palace of the inveterate high priest, and there treated with every insult and cruelty—when, at those trying moments wherein he would have been solaced by the faithful attachment of his disciples, he beheld the base treachery of one, the heartless denial of another and the cowardly desertion of all—when, reviled, buffeted, spit upon and scourged, he was condemned to bear his cross to the scene of his last suffering and ignominy, and on the hill of Calvary, subjected to the base death of a malefactor, betwixt two thieves. But all these his trials and afflictions are particularized in the records of eye witnesses and contemporaries, and related with a simplicity and pathos which no effort of mere human eloquence can emulate.

It is proper, however, before we attend him from the judgment hall of Pilate to the place of his final suffering, to make some remarks on the time in which these interesting and pathetic incidents took place, generally noted in the Articles of our Faith by the words, *UNDER PONTIUS PILATE*. That we are right as to the fact, it would be sufficient to adduce the express words of the historian Tacitus already quoted; but besides his and the testimonies of others, there are strong grounds for confidence in the opinion that Pilate transmitted to his Imperial Master a minute account of the whole transaction.* But these words were chiefly introduced into the Creed, to be a remembrancer of the *date* of the occurrence; and the citation of the presidency of Pontius Pilate over Judæa at the time, whilst it afforded the only correct method of maintaining the chronology of the event, served to confirm the fulfilment of certain predictions regarding the sufferings of the Messiah. It was foretold that the *sceptre* was then to be *departed from Judah*; and the mention of a Roman Governor in Judæa when *Shiloh came*, pointedly implies the subjection of the Jews to a foreign yoke. The Scriptures too had alluded to the manner of our Saviour's death in such terms as render the citation of the peculiar time, particularly expedient; for when it is said that he *suffered under Pontius Pilate*, a Roman Governor, we must be confirmed in our belief of those Scriptures by remembering that a death was foretold to the Messiah never inflicted by Jews,† but practised upon heinous malefactors by the Romans alone.‡

* Euseb. Hist. Eccles. Lib. ii. 2. Justin Martyr Apolog.—Tertull. Apolog. 21.

† The Jews sometimes affixed offenders to crosses; but not till they had first been put to death in some other manner.

‡ This punishment was emphatically called *servile supplicium*; whilst its painfulness was sufficiently denoted by the application of the word *cruciatu*s—derived from *crux*, a cross—to the utmost severity of anguish and pain.