

the murderer? True we read—"It behoved him to suffer for the sins of the people," &c. But these sayings refer to the act not to the mode of suffering. St. Peter makes the distinction—"Him being delivered by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, ye have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain"—Acts ii. 23. True there was also a necessity arising from prophecy as to the mode of his sufferings, —but prophecy is not decree—foreknowledge is not fore-appointment, the one comprehends—the other foresees and declares. If Christ had died in the garden, the atonement had been as perfect, as by his dying on the cross. But this arrested the public mind, called general attention to the fact itself, its accompanying and succeeding circumstances, and prepared the world for the doctrine of his death.

2. His death was *shameful*, and *agonizing*. Crucifixion was only inflicted on slaves, and the vilest criminals. That it was so in the mind of the Jews—see their own law. "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree"—Gal iii. 13. What it was in the mind of the Romans—see Cicero's oration against Verres. It was also painful, scourging, crucifixion. 'Twas thus your Saviour died. Reflect upon it—it will do you good. Mark each stage. Great as was his physical anguish—his mental was still greater. 'Tis true, darkness is over the scene. We are not permitted to investigate the subject. Nor could we either fathom its depths or bear the sight. Yet enough is manifested, to excite our awe, touch our sympathies, and call forth our love. We know 'twas the hour of conflict with Satan, the hour of "the power of darkness," the time of the hiding of the Father's face. Bitter was the cup—his humanity trembled.

3. His death was *voluntary*. Not by constraint, willingly your Saviour died. True, while on the earth, he referred his mission to the will and appointment of the Father—John ix, 4. But his obedience was not servile but filial. He was under no obligation, for he had no superior; under no law, because he had no Creator.

His *entrance* was voluntary. "So I come in the books, &c." His continuance was voluntary. True he prayed in the garden for the removal of the cup, but his prayer was conditional. Had it been answered, the cup had been shivered in his hands—Mat. xxvi. 53, 54. We admit that he was seized by an armed guard, and violently led to execution; but the guard had no power to force him. See the effect of his question. They bound him with nails, but the nails had no power. They were the authors of his death intentionally and morally, but not really so. He died not by the pressure of his sufferings, but by an act of his will. He outlived his agony instead of sinking. The last pang had been felt. He