

these momentous events (sufferings of Christ), as mere spectacular displays, much less as fictions, but as glorious facts on which depend our own welfare and that of the world," (p. 363) it is difficult to see, on his theory, what more these "events" were than a spectacular atonement, seeking to uphold the justice of the Divine government by a display, or dramatic declaration, in virtue of which punishment may be remitted. If a sovereign judge, instead of punishing his criminal subjects, publicly exhibited his mental distress and horror at their crimes, inflicting torture other than the appointed penalty on himself, would that have any tendency to vindicate the law, or to prove the justice of his government, or afford any ground on which to forgive their evil deeds? How much less would a similar method avail in the Divine government. A human government may, from weakness, or from expediency, fail to execute a merited punishment; but in either case, it is a defect and defeasance of justice, and shows the government is imperfect, either in the making or in the administration of its laws. No such imperfection can belong to Divine government.

Assuming their success as a display, what was there in the "events" but a revelation, or confirmation of *truth*, which was communicable by other means? How could that atone for sin? But would those "events," on the non-penal theory, really avail to *show* the justice of the moral Ruler, or of His government? The appointed penalty, in the case of believers, is not enforced; but some other sufferings, having no penal character, are endured; and this is the proof of the certainty of law and the firmness of justice in government! One finds it easier to think such a course of procedure more suited to demonstrate the laxity of government and the deficiency of justice. The "events" are said to furnish "impressive views of the evil of sin, or of the majesty of the law" (p. 359). Is it not rather a view of failure in these respects? However that may be, "impressive views" of anything can have no fitness or efficacy to satisfy the necessities of justice. We are told the non-penal suffering of Christ "stamps sin as an abominable thing," and "exhibits the inviolability of the Divine law." Would it not do the very opposite? Those are effects of Christ's penal suffering in our stead.