

also. But do we of ourselves know enough of God's nature, and the nature of justice in the abstract, to reason coolly and confidently about this great question? Have not all our better thoughts, our most certain convictions about God, come to us from His express revelation? This is evident from comparing Christian theism, and even philosophic theism in Christian countries, with the wisest speculations of the heathen. At any rate, it is as Christians I address you now, as those who profess to learn of God from His revelation to His Church, as those who sympathise with the holy Apostle's eager repudiation of the charge of injustice against God because He "taketh vengeance." He is struck with horror at his own question, and he hastens to say it is only "as a man," ignorant and selfish, that he speaks. From the stand-point of Christian faith and enlightenment the thought could not be other than blasphemous; and, not content with his reverent parenthesis, St. Paul expresses his abhorrence of the very thought in the earnest and rapid *μὴ γένοιτο*: "God forbid," far be the dreadful imagination from me! In the first chapter of this very Epistle we are told "the wrath, *ὀργή*, of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men;" and revealed as "the righteousness of God is revealed"—in the very Gospel itself. Dim is our unaided vision of God's righteousness and God's innate necessary hatred of sin. We cannot but err when we become judges in our own causes, between ourselves and God. Our "sweet self-pity" alone suffices to mislead us, and if we would go aright we must be guided herein by that "revelation from heaven" to which the Apostle appeals. This revelation tells us that "*ἡ ὀργή*, the wrath or vengeance of God abideth on him who believeth not on the Son," John 3: 36; that God, the gracious and merciful God, once said of the unbelieving and disobedient, "So I swear *ἐν τῇ ὀργῇ σου*, in My wrath, they shall not enter into my rest," Heb. 3: 11; and the words are in the Christian revelation adduced for the standing admonition of the covenant people.

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