

RESTORATIONISM.

Rom. iii. 5. "Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance?"

μη ἄδικος ὁ Θεὸς ὁ ἐπιφέρει τὴν ὀργήν;

From all who believe in God, in the customary sense of the word, the first part of this question is sure to receive a unanimous answer. "Is God unrighteous?" they will, either coolly or fervently, answer "No." But at the full question of the text, "Is God unrighteous who taketh vengeance?" many are found to demur. "Does God, indeed, take vengeance?" they ask. Does He "inflict τὴν ὀργήν, the wrath," so often referred to as the expression of His displeasure against sin, and specially to be inflicted at the judgment? They assume, as a certain principle, that all punishment must be reformatory, and therefore that the idea of ὀργή, wrath, an infliction wholly punitive, must be excluded from our belief in God. Hence, too, it is argued that in the human administration of justice all capital punishments should be abolished, and none retained but such as shall tend to the criminal's moral improvement.* To these mild sentiments there can be no doubt that the Gospel of Christ has powerfully contributed, but it does not justify such partial views of God as the Judge. While it animates us with the vision of a God of perfect compassion, it awes us with the exhibition of a corresponding severity of justice. It suggests to us rather that as God is perfectly just, all sorts of justice must be in Him, and so punitive justice

* Rom. 13: 4, shows the sense of ὀργή in the text. The magistrate is a revenger for wrath," εἰς ὀργήν. And 4: 15.