

Notes on the Greek New Testament Day 210 – July 29th – Romans 12:1-21

Works frequently referenced in these notes on Romans

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Romans 12 ff.

"Paul has briefly touched on the practical significance of what he writes throughout Romans 1-11 (see, e.g., 6:11-13, 19; 11:18,20). But beginning in chapter 12 Paul turns his full attention to the ethical implications of the gospel." Moo.

Wright, commenting particularly on the opening verses, says, "The underlying thrust of these verses is that Christians, Jew and Gentile alike, now offer to the one true God the full and final sacrificial worship in which Israel's worship (cf. 9:4) is made complete."

"As new covenant Christians, we no longer offer animal sacrifices; we now offer ourselves as 'living sacrifices.' 'Living' perhaps has a theological meaning: We offer ourselves as people who have been brought from death to life (see 6:13). This may, however, be reading more into the word than we should. Paul probably wants us simply to contrast ourselves with the dead animal sacrifices of the Old Testament (see also John 6:51). But God demands sacrifices that are 'holy,' that is, apart from profane matters and dedicated to his service." Moo.

ἅγιος, α, ον holy, consecrated, set apart
to/by God
εὐάρεστος, ον acceptable, pleasing

Verse 1

Παρακαλῶ οὖν ὑμᾶς, ἀδελφοί, διὰ τῶν οἰκτιρμῶν τοῦ θεοῦ παραστήσαι τὰ σώματα ὑμῶν θυσίαν ζῶσαν ἁγίαν εὐάρεστον τῷ θεῷ, τὴν λογικὴν λατρείαν ὑμῶν·

παρακαλεω exhort, encourage, urge
οἰκτιρμος, ου m compassion, mercy

"These are the tender mercies of God, the riches of his compassion (cf. 2 Cor 1:3; Phil 2:1; Col 3:12)." Murray.

The cognate verb has occurred in Paul's quotation of Exod 33:19 at 9:15. "It stands here as a way of summing up 'the depth of God's riches and wisdom and knowledge' as invoked in 11:33." Wright.

παριστημι and παριστανω present, bring
into one's presence

Cf. 6:13,16,19.

σῶμα, τος n body

Perhaps in deliberate contrast with Greek philosophy which paid little attention to the body in its ethical teaching. Here standing for the whole person and every aspect of its life.

θυσια, ας f sacrifice, victim
ζῶσαν Verb, pres act ptc, f acc s ζαω live,
be alive

It is Christ's death which makes the believer acceptable to God, cf. 14:18. Wright insists that the full sense of 'well-pleasing' should not be watered down. "Paul insists in several passages that Christian worship and obedience, holiness and unity do indeed please God, and if we have articulated his other doctrines (e.g., justification) in such a way as to exclude this notion, we have clearly misrepresented him. (see 14:18; 2 Cor 5:9; Eph 5:10; Phil 4:18; Col 3:20 – all the same word as here; see also the use of ἀρέσκω ... in 1 Cor 7:32; 1 Thess 2:4; 4:1; and, most strikingly, Rom 8:8, where 'those in the flesh' cannot please God but, it is strongly implied, 'those in the Spirit' can and do.) In fact, the alternative to 'pleasing God' is not simply living at a morally neutral state, neither pleasing nor displeasing; it may well be 'to please oneself' (15:1), or (in a bad sense) 'to please other people' (Gal 1:10). If we want to enquire further as to how it can be that a human being, a creature and a sinner, can please the living God, the holy creator, the logic of the letter as a whole, and of Paul's arguments elsewhere, suggests that it might have something to do with being restored in God's image (see 1:18-25 and the Commentary; 8:29; Col 3:10)."

λογικος, η, ον rational, spiritual
λατρεία, ας f service, worship

Barrett comments that Paul means a worship consisting not in outward rites but in the movement of man's being. He considers that this is described better as 'spiritual worship' than 'rational'.
Murray prefers 'rational' (though for similar reasons), i.e. worship or service which involves the mind and reason rather than being mechanical.
Moo thinks the meaning is 'informed' or 'understanding.' "We give ourselves to God as his sacrifices when we understand his grace and its place in our lives. We offer ourselves not ignorantly, like animals brought to the slaughter, but intelligently and willingly. This is the worship that pleases God."

Verse 2

καὶ μὴ συσχηματίζεσθε τῷ αἰῶνι τούτῳ, ἀλλὰ μεταμορφοῦσθε τῇ ἀνακαινώσει τοῦ νοῦς, εἰς τὸ δοκιμάζειν ὑμᾶς τί τὸ θέλημα τοῦ θεοῦ, τὸ ἀγαθὸν καὶ εὐάρεστον καὶ τέλειον.

"The leading thought of verse 2 is the pattern of behaviour. In connection with the concrete and practical details of life there is no more searching question than that of the pattern of thought and action which we follow. To what standards do we conform?" Murray.

συσχηματίζομαι be conformed to, be shaped by, live after the pattern of

On use of this and the following verb, cf. Phil 3:21.

αἰών, αἰῶνος m age, world order, eternity

All that belongs to this present age as distinct from the age to come. Cf. 1 Cor 7:29-31; 1 Jn 2:17. "We must have patterns that abide, patterns that are the earnest of and are continuous with the age to come." Murray. Paul's argument here is based on his 'two-age' understanding of salvation history, rooted in Jewish thinking but transformed by the coming of Christ. The age to come has broken into history with the death and resurrection of Christ. The old has gone; the new has come. "Paul sees the new age, long awaited within Judaism, as having broken in to the present age in the Messiah, and understands Christians as living at their point of overlap, needing constantly to reject the pressures of the present age and to be open to the life of the new, the life offered in the Messiah." Wright.

μεταμορφοῦμαι be changed in form, be transformed

ἀνακαινώσις, εὖς f renewal

νοῦς, νοός, νοί, νοῦν m mind, thought, reason, understanding

A call to have the mind of the Messiah (1 Cor 2:16; also see Phil 2:5f. though a different word is used).

"Sanctification is a process of revolutionary change in that which is the centre of consciousness. This sounds a fundamental note of biblical ethic. It is the thought of progression and strikes at the stagnation, complacency and pride of achievement so often characterising Christians. It is not the beggarly notion of second blessing that the apostle propounds but that of constant renewal, of metamorphosis in the seat of the consciousness." Murray. Cf. 2 Cor 3:18; 4:16; Col 3:10; Titus 3:5.

δοκιμάζω test, prove, discern

Prove by experience – learn how good and satisfying it is to do God's will, cf. 1 Tim 6:6. "The Christian is not meant to rely simply on lists of ethical commands, but to be able to discern (NRSV), to test and approve (NIV), what God's will is... There is such a thing as knowing and doing God's will, and ... we are commanded to pursue it, as Paul indicates in 1 Cor 3:18-23, humbly but confidently." Wright.

θέλημα, ατος n will, wish, desire

ἀγαθος, η, ον good, useful, fitting

εὐάρεστος, ον acceptable, pleasing

τέλειος, α, ον complete, whole, perfect

Verses 1-2 – Postscript

"Verses 1 and 2 offer a fine balance between sacrifice and fulfilment, between an ethic of self-denial and one of self-discovery. Even the self-discovery, however, is the discovery of the *new* self that one is called to become in Christ and by the Spirit." Wright.

Verse 3

Λέγω γὰρ διὰ τῆς χάριτος τῆς δοθείσης μοι παντὶ τῷ ὄντι ἐν ὑμῖν μὴ ὑπερφρονεῖν παρ' ὃ δεῖ φρονεῖν, ἀλλὰ φρονεῖν εἰς τὸ σωφρονεῖν, ἐκάστῳ ὡς ὁ θεὸς ἐμέρισεν μέτρον πίστεως.

Paul turns now to the behaviour of Christians one towards another. It is in our corporate life that the inbreaking of the kingdom is made visible. The γὰρ links this section to vv. 1-2, as Wright puts it, "Offer God the true worship; be transformed by having your minds renewed; because you should be thinking as one person in the Messiah."

δοθείσης Verb, aor pass ptc, f gen s δίδωμι

Paul is gently reminding the Romans of his authority as an apostle, a derived authority: God has graciously equipped him for this particular task and has also laid hold of Paul's readers in grace.

ὑπερφρονεῶ hold too high an opinion of oneself

δεῖ must, should, ought

φρονεῶ think, have in mind

This is the verb used in Phil 2 of the need for Christians to have the same mind/mode of thinking that shaped Christ himself.

σωφρονεῶ be in one's right mind

ἐκάστος, η, ον each, every

μερίζω divide, assign, apportion

μέτρον, ον n measure, degree, quantity

πίστις, εως f faith, trust, belief

A Christian's opinion of themselves should be in proportion not to their natural capacities but to God's gifts. If this is so, they will never be boastful, for they will remember that they have nothing that they have not received (1 Cor 4:7). Perhaps this is Paul's meaning – the measure by which the Christian is to measure all things is faith which excludes all self-congratulation. I.e. there is a single measure for all (so Wright – each person stands only by faith, cf. 11:19-25).

Verse 4

καθάπερ γὰρ ἐν ἐνὶ σώματι πολλὰ μέλη ἔχομεν, τὰ δὲ μέλη πάντα οὐ τὴν αὐτὴν ἔχει πράξιν,

καθάπερ as, just as

εἰς, μια, ἐν gen ἑνος, μιας, ἑνος one, a, an, single

σῶμα, τος n body

Cf. 1 Cor 12.

πολύς, πολλή, πολὺ gen πολλοῦ, ης, ου much, many

μέλη Noun, nom/acc pl μέλος, ος n

member, bodily part

πραξίς, εως f what one does, function

Verse 5

οὕτως οἱ πολλοὶ ἐν σῶμά ἐσμεν ἐν Χριστῷ, τὸ δὲ καθ' εἷς ἀλλήλων μέλη.

οὕτως thus, in this way

ἐν σῶμά ἐσμεν ἐν Χριστῷ Christians, together, are the presence and expression of Christ on earth.

ἀλλήλων, οἰς, ος one another

το δε καθ εἷς ἀλλήλων μελη 'and each member belongs to all the others'.

Verse 6

ἔχοντες δὲ χαρίσματα κατὰ τὴν χάριν τὴν δοθείσαν ἡμῖν διάφορα, εἴτε προφητείαν κατὰ τὴν ἀναλογίαν τῆς πίστεως,

The participle ἔχοντες seems to correspond to no finite verb. Barrett understands it as an imperative. "since we have ... let us ..."

χαρίσμα, τος n gift (from God)

Varied gifts given to different individuals for the corporate edification of the church. Cf. 1 Cor 1:7; 12:4,9,28,30,31; 1 Tim 4:14; 2 Tim 1:6.

δοθείσαν Verb, aor pass ptc, f acc s δίδωμι

διαφορός, ον different

εἴτε if, whether

This, like other such lists in Paul's writings, is not intended to be a definitive list; it is an *ad hoc* listing of examples. Comparing this list with that in 1 Corinthians 12, Wright comments, "Possibly this list is deliberately general, emphasising 'ordinary' rather than 'extraordinary' gifts, because Paul does not actually know what special gifts the Christians in Rome may possess. His main point is that just as God has given him grace for his task (v.3), so God gives the church grace for its multiple and mutually supportive tasks, and whatever they are they must be exercised to the full extent of one's powers."

ἀναλογία, ας f proportion

"The prophet, when he speaks God's word, is not to go beyond that which God has given him to speak. But he is to exercise the gift to its full extent." Murray (so also Wright).

Verse 7

εἴτε διακονίαν ἐν τῇ διακονίᾳ, εἴτε ὁ διδάσκων ἐν τῇ διδασκαλίᾳ,

διακονια, ας f ministry, service

Often used of ministry of the word, but could refer to ministry of mercy (cf. Acts 6:1-6). Furthermore, all Christians are to be servants – the term does not refer to an *office* but to a *function* in which all are to engage.

διδασκω teach

διδασκαλια, ας f what is taught, teaching

Verse 8

εἴτε ὁ παρακαλῶν ἐν τῇ παρακλήσει, ὁ μεταδιδούς ἐν ἀπλότητι, ὁ προϊστάμενος ἐν σπουδῇ, ὁ ἐλεῶν ἐν ἰλαρότητι.

παρακαλεω exhort, encourage, urge
παρακλησις, εως f encouragement,
comfort, counsel

μεταδιδούς Verb, pres act ptc, m nom s
μεταδιδωμι share, give, impart

ἀπλοτης, ητος f generosity, liberality

Suggests an absence of any ulterior motives or aims.

προϊστάμενος Verb, pres midd ptc, m nom s
προϊστημι be a leader, have authority
over

σπουδη, ης f earnestness, diligence,
eagerness

ἐλεαω and ἐλεεω be merciful, show
kindness

ἰλαροτης, ητος f cheerfulness

Verses 9-13

"There now follows a series of clauses containing only participles, with no finite verb. It is evident and undisputed that these participles must be understood as imperatives, 'Abhor', 'cleave' etc." Barrett. Barrett suggests that this reflects Rabbinic Hebrew usage for lists of rules and that this list may even come from such a Semitic source. Cf. 1 Thess 5:12–22 and 1 Pet 3:8–12.

Verse 9

Ἡ ἀγάπη ἀνυπόκριτος. ἀποστυγοῦντες τὸ πονηρόν, κολλώμενοι τῷ ἀγαθῷ.

ἀνυποκριτος, ον sincere, genuine

Dunn comments, "As in 1 Cor 12–13, Paul's thought moves from talk of the body of Christ to the theme of love ... subsumed under the appeal of vv 1–2."

Moo suggests that the verbless first clause is a heading to what follows, 'Love that is sincere will be ...' It introduces the many facets of sincere love listed in vv.9b-13. Nygren translates loosely, "This is what love is like", and Wright suggests, "These are the ways ... in which love will show itself to be the true version rather than the counterfeit."

ἀποστυγεω hate

πονηρος, α, ον evil, bad, wicked

κολλαομαι unite oneself with

ἀγαθος, η, ον good, useful, fitting

Cf. 1 Thess 5:21–22. "Our attachment to the good is to be that of the devotion illustrated in the bond of marriage." Murray.

Verse 10

τῇ φιλαδελφίᾳ εἰς ἀλλήλους φιλόστοργοι, τῇ τιμῇ ἀλλήλους προηγούμενοι,

φιλαδελφια, ας f brotherly love

Barrett comments that the term does not seem to have been used metaphorically before the New Testament.

ἀλληλων, ος, ους one another

φιλοστοργος, ον loving, devoted

"With v 10 the body imagery gives way to that of the family... The Christian use of these typically family words does rather stand out in its consistency, and the combination of both words underscores the point. This too is part of the redefinition of boundaries in which Paul engages – a sense of family belongingness which transcended immediate family ties and did not depend on natural or ethnic bonds. The organic imagery of the interrelatedness of the body requires to be supplemented by the emotional bond of family affection." Dunn.

τιμη, ης f honour, respect, price

προηγεομαι out-do, lead the way (τιμη ἀλληλους π. perhaps be eager to show respect to one another)

'Showing the way to one another in respect.'
"Another side of such love is the readiness to recognize strengths and to praise attainments of family members." Dunn.

Verse 11

τῇ σπουδῇ μὴ ὀκνηροί, τῷ πνεύματι ζέοντες, τῷ κυρίῳ δουλεύοντες,

σπουδη, ης f earnestness, eagerness,
zeal

ὀκνηρος, α, ον lazy, troublesome

ζεω boil – with enthusiasm or with
devotion

'Aglow in the Spirit'

'Serving the Lord' "probably functions once again as something of a control or check on what might otherwise be interpreted as an invitation to unbridled enthusiasm. The love which binds a congregation together needs that inner spontaneity bubbling up within if it is to remain fresh and personally real, but it can easily become too experiential and 'frothy' unless it expresses also the fundamental commitment to Christ as Lord and is motivated by the desire to serve him." Dunn.

Some few Western MSS read *καίρω* in place of *κυριω*.

Verse 12

τῇ ἐλπίδι χαίροντες, τῇ θλίψει ὑπομένοντες, τῇ προσευχῇ προσκαρτεροῦντες,

ἐλπις, ἰδος f hope, ground of hope, what is hoped for

"As earlier, ἐλπις has its usual Hebraic sense of confident trust (sure hope) rather than the more Greek sense of tentative expectation (hoping for better things); see on 4:18." Dunn.

χαίρω rejoice, be glad

"The association of hope, rejoicing, affliction, and patient endurance is one which came naturally to Paul (cf. 5:2–5), and 'persistence in prayer' as an expression of 'endurance in affliction' was equally natural (cf. 8:18–27)." Dunn.

θλίψις, εως f trouble, suffering
ὑπομενω endure, remain behind

"The sequence again echoes 1 Cor 12–13 (here 13:7)." Dunn

ὑπομενω should not be given too passive a connotation. It implies a positive attitude to suffering.

προσκαρτερεω devote oneself to

Dunn says that this is "an even stronger, or more positive, word – 'to busy oneself with, be devoted to, hold fast to or persevere in something.'" He comments further, "Such hope sustains the patient endurance in suffering and the persistence in prayer. Likewise it is itself sustained by prayer; for in the midst of suffering only an uninhibited crying out to God can provide sufficient safety valve for the pressures of potential despair."

Verse 13

ταῖς χρείαις τῶν ἀγίων κοινωνοῦντες, τὴν φιλοξενίαν διώκοντες.

χρεία, ας f need, want

"Here personal difficulties, particularly financial and daily necessities are probably in view (cf. Acts 2:45; 4:35; 6:3; 20:34; 28:10; Eph 4:28; Phil 2:25; 4:16; Titus 3:14; 1 John 3:17)... Paul's talk later and elsewhere of a 'sharing' (κοινωνία) in the sense of 'gift or contribution' 'for the saints' (15:26; 2 Cor 8:4) suggests strongly that Paul has the collection particularly in mind ... but that would only be a particular example of a more general involvement in common concern for the bodily needs of one another." Dunn.

ἅγιος, α, ον holy; οἱ ἅγιοι God's people

"By describing the members of the churches as 'saints' Paul reminds his listeners once again that they are the eschatological equivalent to the Israel of old. And though the boundaries of the people of God have been redrawn in terms of grace and faith rather than of physical descent and law, the ancient obligations of Israel to care for the disadvantaged within the wider community have not been withdrawn or redefined, but still remain part of the scriptural definition of the will of God." Dunn.

κοινωνεω share, take part, contribute
φιλοξενία, ας f hospitality
διωκω seek after, pursue, persecute

I.e. the hospitality is not to be grudging. "Within Judaism the memory of Israel's experience as 'strangers in Egypt' was a powerful reinforcement of the impulse to hospitality (especially Lev 19:34 and Deut 10:19)... Hospitality was a key feature of Jesus' ministry, both in his dependence on it (Mark 1:29–31; 14:3; Luke 10:38–42) and in his practice and commendation of it as a model of divine generosity (Mark 2:15–17; Matt 11:19//Luke 7:34; Luke 14:1–24). The early mission would likewise depend on such hospitality (e.g., Mark 6:8–11 pars.; Acts 16:15; 18:3; see also 16:1–2, 13, 23)... Subsequently hospitableness is regarded as a desirable characteristic in a bishop (1 Tim 3:2; Titus 1:8)." Dunn.

Verses 14-21

"In vv 14–21 Paul broadens his perspective from the internal relationships within and among the Christian congregations to take in their relationships with the wider community within which they had to live and make their living. Paul evidently was mindful of the political realities which confronted these new small groups within the cities of the Roman Empire in the eastern Mediterranean. In particular he would be aware of the fact that the little churches in Rome were an endangered species, vulnerable to further imperial ruling against Jews and societies. His first concern therefore is to urge a policy of avoiding trouble by refusing retaliation to provocations and by responding with positive good to all hostile acts directed against them." Dunn.

Verse 14

εὐλογεῖτε τοὺς διώκοντας, εὐλογεῖτε καὶ μὴ καταρᾶσθε.

Paul now shifts to the use of the imperative.

εὐλογεω speak well of, bless

"The idea 'bless' comes wholly from the Hebrew בָּרַךְ and gains its distinctive character from the distinctively Jewish idea of God blessing his human creatures, where 'bless' has a much stronger force than the Greek εὐλογεῖν – 'bless' in the sense of bestow grace and peace, sustain and prosper (as in the classic formulation of the Aaronic benediction – Num 6:24–26). When one person blesses another, the clear implication is that he calls on Yahweh to bestow his favour on the other, although a particular blessing (expression of that favour) could of course be requested (as in Gen 27:27–29; 49:28; Deut 33; 1 Sam 2:20). By way of antithesis καταρᾶσθαι obviously means to call on God to withhold his favour (both specific and providential), and, possibly, also to act as a power for ill in the life and circumstances of the one cursed (e.g., 2 Sam 16:5–13; 2 Kgs 2:24)." Dunn.

ὕμας is omitted by p⁴⁶ B and a few other sources.

καταραομαι curse, place a curse upon

Cf. Matt 5:38-48; Lk 6:27-35; 23:34; Acts 7:60; 1 Cor 4:12; 1 Pet 2:20-23; 3:9. A distinctively Christian attitude; "It is hard to imagine this teaching becoming the norm in the church, as it clearly did from the very start, unless it was firmly rooted in the words and example of Jesus himself." Wright.

Verses 15-16

"The fact that vv 15–16 seem to focus attention back once again more on the internal relationships of the Christian congregations should not be seen merely as a disruption of the wider concern. On the contrary, these verses should be taken as some indication of the degree to which Paul saw the life of the Christian churches as integrated into the wider life in the city. The call for sensitive sympathy with those caught in the ups and downs of daily life (v 15), for a proper modesty of self-esteem and for a genuine solidarity with the most lowly ranked or disadvantaged within the congregation (v 16) is of a piece with the positive will to bless the persecutor (v 14) and to do good to the malicious and spiteful (v 17). Paul did not see a Christian's life as divided neatly into two sets of attitudes and obligations – one to fellow believers, the other to nonbelievers. The same sympathetic concern and positive outgoing love should be the rule in all cases – a love which does not reckon or depend on receiving a positive response in turn. For this not only Jesus' words but Jesus' example provided the model which would be not far from the surface of Paul's mind." Dunn.

Verse 15

χαίρειν μετὰ χαϊρόντων, κλαίειν μετὰ κλαιόντων.

χαίρω v.12

κλαιω weep, cry; trans weep for

Cf. 1 Cor 12:26. Dunn comments "The parallel with 1 Cor 12:26 and Phil 2:17–18 suggests that Paul had the internal relationships of the Christian congregations particularly in view, but there is no reason he should not have had wider associations in view as well." Wright goes further, commenting, "In this context it may be best to read vv. 15-16, not as commands about the internal life of the church, but as suggesting how Christians should live alongside their pagan neighbours."

Verse 16

τὸ αὐτὸ εἰς ἀλλήλους φρονοῦντες, μὴ τὰ ὑψηλὰ φρονοῦντες ἀλλὰ τοῖς ταπεινοῖς συναπαγόμενοι. μὴ γίνεσθε φρόνιμοι παρ' ἑαυτοῖς.

Cf. Phil 2:1-4.

ἀλλήλων, οἱ, οὗς v.10

φρονεω think, have in mind

"Paul would want Christian congregations to decide as far as possible by consensus, by seeking the mind of the Spirit on matters affecting their life and worship together (cf. I Cor 2:16; 6:5; 7:40; 14:37–38), even if in matters of personal lifestyle different views and practices were quite acceptable (see chap. 14)." Dunn.

ύψηλος, η, ον high, proud, exalted

'Do not cherish proud thoughts.'

ταπεινος, η, ον humble, lowly, poor
συναπαγομαι associate with humble
people or be engaged in humble tasks

ταπεινοίς can be taken as neuter, in which case the sense is 'be engaged in humble tasks', but it is more likely to be a reference to humble people, since this is the only use of ταπεινός elsewhere in the NT. Dunn comments, "Here again Paul takes it for granted that Christians should live in accordance with this insight, as also commended and exemplified by Jesus (in particular Matt 5:3–5; 11:29; 18:4; 23:12; cf. Mark 10:42–45). The ambiguity of ταπεινός (neuter or masculine) cannot be resolved, and may have been deliberate (Barrett), and is usually left open—menial or lowly tasks, or people held in low esteem by the influential and powerful."

φρονιμος, ον wise, sensible

'Do not be wise in your own estimation.' Cf. Prov 3:7.

Verse 17

μηδενι κακον αντι κακου αποδιδοντες·
προνοουμενοι καλα ενωπιον παντων
ανθρωπων·

μηδεις, μηδεμα, μηδεν no one, nothing
κακος, η, ον evil, bad, wrong, harm
αντι prep with gen for, in place of
αποδιδωμι render, give back, repay

"The exhortation to return evil with good ... is presented as more distinctively Christian [than the *lex talionis*] (Matt 5:38–48//Luke 6:27–36; see further on 12:14, but also on 13:10). It quickly became a firm part of Christian parenesis (1 Thess 5:15; 1 Pet 3:9; Pol. *Phil.* 2.2)." Dunn.

προνοεω have in mind to do

"The basic meaning of προνοεω is 'think beforehand,' so 'take into consideration' or 'take thought for,' blending into the proactive sense 'provide for' (LSJ). Both here and in 2 Cor 8:21 the thought seems to be more of the need for sensitivity to the views of others than of active material provision, as in 1 Tim 5:8." Dunn.

καλος, η, ον good, right, proper, beautiful

Not only do well, but manifestly do well

ενωπιον before, in the presence of

'In the sight of all.'

Verse 18

ει δυνατον, το εξ υμων μετα παντων
ανθρωπων ειρηνευοντες·

δυνατος, η, ον possible, able
ειρηνευω live or be at peace

Cf. 2 Cor 13:11; 1 Thess 5:13 also Heb 12:14. "Paul is realistic: he knows that there will be many times when living at peace with every other inhabitant of the street, let alone the city, will be impossible. But he summons Christians to make every effort in that direction." Wright.

Verse 19

μη εαυτους εκδικουντες, αγαπητοι, αλλα δοτε
τοπον τη οργη, γεγραπται γαρ· Εμοι
εκδικησις, εγω ανταποδωσω, λεγει κυριος.

εκδικεω avenge, punish
αγαπητος, η, ον beloved

"God's people are loved by God and must not imagine themselves bereft of his care and hence needing to take matters into their own hands." Wright.

δοτε Verb, aor act imperat, 2 pl διδωμι
τοπος, ου m place
οργη, ης f wrath, anger

I.e. God's wrath.

"In the context of Rome, the advice may not seem to have been very necessary for politically powerless Christian churches, but the growing and increasingly desperate activity of the Zealots in Palestine was warning enough of how an oppressed people or persecuted minority might turn to acts of revenge, and the Christian congregations would not need reminding of how vulnerable they were to hostile pressures." Dunn.

γεγραπται Verb, perf pass indic, 3 s γραφω

Cf. Deut 32:35 also Heb 10:30.

εμοι Pronoun, dat s εγω
εκδικησις, εως f retribution, rendering of
justice

ανταποδωσω Verb, fut act indic, 1 s
ανταποδιδωμι repay, return

Verse 20

αλλα εαν πεινα ο εχθρος σου, ψωμιζε αυτον·
εαν διψα, ποτιζε αυτον· τουτο γαρ ποιων
ανθρακας πυρος σωρευσεις επι την κεφαλην
αυτου.

εαν if
πειναω be hungry
εχθρος, α, ον enemy, one hated
ψωμιζω feed, give food to
διψαω be thirsty, thirst for

ποτιζω give to drink, water

Cf. Lk 6:27-30.

ἀνθραξ, ακος m charcoal (ἀ. πυρος
burning coals)

πυρ, ος n fire

σωρευω heap up

κεφαλη, ης f head

This verse is a quotation from Prov 25:21,22. There is some debate over the meaning of these words. It *could* be a picture of divine judgment, i.e. kindness will result in further judgment on these people by God. However, it is more likely that, in context, the meaning is that they might be convicted of their wrong behaviour and perhaps repent and turn to God – a burning shame leading to repentance (so Cranfield).

In countering the suggestion that the burning coals signify judgment, Dunn comments, "Such a negative tone (do good to your enemy so that his punishment will be all the more severe) fits ill with the context: the spirit of the Sermon on the Mount breathes through these verses (cf. Dodd, Schmidt) with a consistent call to open-handed goodness and generous response unmotivated by malice – vv 14, 17, 19, 21. In particular the ἀλλά sets v 20 in some contrast to the idea of leaving the enemy to God's judgment; to read the contrast as 'Leave your enemy to God, but try to increase his guilt by your acts of kindness' strikes a jarring note. And it hardly fits comfortably either with the positive thrust of v 20a–b (cf. 2 Kgs 6:22) or with the final call to 'overcome evil by good'... As already noted, therefore, the ἀλλά is best taken as calling for a positive response to hostility (by meeting it with acts of kindness) and not simply as a passive response (leave it to God)... Here too the Targum of Prov 25:21–22 is probably important since it adds: '... on his head and God will hand him over to you' or 'will make him your friend' (Str-B, 3:302), that is, 'you will win him' in a missionary sense... Without being able to specify the meaning precisely therefore we probably have sufficient reason to conclude that Paul would have intended the Proverbs citation to bear a positive meaning: that is, as explicating and underlining the importance of meeting an enemy with hospitality and kindness."

Wright adds, "The 'coals of fire' are almost certainly intended as the burning shame of remorse for having treated someone badly... The point is then that treating enemies kindly is not only appropriate behaviour in its own right, refusing the vengeance that would usurp God's prerogative; it may also have the effect of turning their hearts."

Verse 21

μη νικῶ ὑπὸ τοῦ κακοῦ, ἀλλὰ νικά ἐν τῷ ἀγαθῷ τὸ κακόν.

νικῶ Verb, pres pass imperat, 2 s νικαω
conquer, overcome

κακος v.17

ἀγαθος, η, ον good, useful, fitting

This is the way in which God himself has proceeded against his enemies. "The present tense indicates a call for dedicated persistence." Dunn.

"To be consumed with vengeful thoughts, or to be led into putting such thoughts into practice, is to keep evil in circulation, whereas the way to overthrow evil, rather than perpetuating it, is to take its force and give back goodness instead. As with the commands of verses 14 and 17, we may question whether someone in Paul's tradition of Torah-based zeal could have come to this position had it not been for the example and teaching of the Messiah himself." Wright.