

One of my favorite stories which demonstrates the application of this verse is found in McGuffey's Eclectic Readers. This particular story demonstrates that when punishment is left in the Lord's hands, justice is fulfilled to all involved and in the end all benefit.

E-10/18A

B-10/18B

McGuffey, William H. "The Best Kind of Revenge." In Fifth Eclectic Reader, 266-268. Chicago: (revised edition) American Book Company, 1896.

- 1- Note in this story how the justice of God takes care of several details for all concerned, made possible because the Grant brothers allowed God to prosecute the case:
 - 1- Had the Grant brothers sought to execute their own revenge on the warehouseman then he could have gone bankrupt before signing the acceptance with the third businessman.
 - 2- In that case the third party would not have had the draft to sign over to the Grant brothers, in which case the Grants would have had to take a loss from his bankruptcy.
 - 3- Had the Grants sought to defend themselves against the pamphleteer's accusations then in might never have come to light that he was libelous.
 - 4- As it turned out, the pamphleteer is able to return to business a better man, the third party was able to transfer some of his debt to the Grants, and the Grants were able to clear their name.
- 2- By turning things over to the Lord for prosecution, everyone involved was raised to a higher level, the stability of the community was strengthened, and everyone's reputation was enhanced or improved.
- 3- If the Grants had sought vengeance none of these things would have occurred.
- 4- If they had lowered themselves to the level of their adversary they would have also assumed his standards and been the recipients of similar divine punishment.
- 5- Instead, the Grants took the high road and even went a step further in the honor code by applying the principle of feeding their enemy.

(See Doc: C:\WP\JBG\90SP-J4.62 for continuation of study at p. 1221.)

Honor Code Principle #12: Always defer to the justice of God when you are tempted to take vengeance or to retaliate. Romans 12:

v 19 = Stop the ongoing practice of avenging yourselves, members of the royal family. Instead, defer to prosecution from the justice of God. For it stands written, "Punishment belongs to Me. I will repay," says the Lord.

13- **Honor Code Principle #13:** When you respond to hostility in grace, you raise your adversary up to your standards. Forbearance and indulgence toward your antagonist allows the Supreme Court of Heaven complete freedom to prosecute your case in the best interests of the perfect Plan of God. Romans 12:

v 20 = Nevertheless, if the one hostile to you is hungry, feed him. If he is thirsty, give him drink. For by doing this you will pile up burning coals of fire on his head.

NOTE: The second sentence in Principle #13 is a bit long but necessary as will be seen as we move through the verse. The words "forbearance" and "indulgence" are two excellent words which connect verse 19 with verse 20.

By them, the sentence in verse 19, "Defer to prosecution from the justice of God," is linked to the final phrase of verse 20, "you will pile up burning coals of fire on his head." These two words best define that transition. We'll see more about this later on but, in the meantime, please forbear and indulge me on the length of this second sentence.

Verse 20 begins with the adversative particle:

>ALLA' = nevertheless; used when whole clauses are compared and indicates a transition to another construction. The new construction is one of sarcastic wit.

1- Try to conceptualize the situation which has been described up to this point:

1- In verse 17 we are commanded not to pay back evil for evil.

- 2- This sets up the mandate in verse 18 to live in harmony with all mankind as long as that harmony depends on us.
- 3- Verse 19 instructs us, when such evil is directed our way or disharmony is created by others, we are not to seek personal vengeance.
- 4- Instead we are to defer to the Supreme Court of Heaven which will prosecute the case from the standpoint of divine justice.
- 5- A rationale is given to support this policy. It is a quote from the Old Testament Scripture and indicates that Jesus Christ will do the punishing and do so in a way compatible with the grace plan of God.
- 6- An important emphasis was noted when we parsed the verb **GRA'PhW**, which is translated, "For it stands written." This is very important in seeing the sarcastic wit of Paul in verse 20.
- 7- The intensive perfect of **GRA'PhW** emphasizes the results of a finished product: the completed canon of the Old Testament. The passive voice says this completed canon received the action of being written and speaks of "verbal plenary inspiration," which is to say it is the expression of a divine policy. The declarative indicative tells us this is a statement of unalterable, absolute Biblical fact.
- 8- An expanded translation could read, "For it stands written as a part of divine inspiration in the Old Testament canon and can be stated as an absolute Biblical fact that 'Punishment belongs to Me. I will repay,' says the Lord."

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2- If we were gamblers we could place bets on what will happen to our enemies who practice evil against us or who break harmony through emotional sins or otherwise.

- 3- We know for a fact that if we maintain the honor code our adversary will not escape punishment from the justice of God.
- 4- There is a parallel passage to verse 19 which we should note here. Hebrews 10: