duty, the more affectionately does the  
Apostle address his readers, with this word.”  
Tholuck.

**give place**] **allow space,**  
i.e. ‘*interpose delay,*’ **to wrath.** We must  
not understand **wrath** to mean ‘*your* anger,’   
nor (though it comes to that) ‘*God's*  
anger,’ but ‘*anger,*’ generally;— ‘*give  
wrath room:*’ ‘proceed not to execute  
it hastily, but leave it for its legitimate  
time, when He whose it is to avenge, will  
execute it: make not the wrath your own,  
but leave it for God.’ So in the main,  
but mostly understanding the wrath to be  
exclusively that of God, Chrysostom, Augustine,   
Theodoret, and the great body of  
Commentators. —Some Fathers interpret  
it, ‘*yield to the anger* (*of your adversary*);’   
but this meaning for the words  
is hardly borne out.—The citation varies  
from the Septuagint, which has, “*in the  
day of vengeance I will repay,*’ and is  
nearer the Hebrew, “*mine is revenge and  
requital.*” It is very remarkable, that in  
Heb. x. 30 the citation is made in the  
same words.

**20.**] **Nay rather, if** is  
the reading of our three oldest MSS.; the  
*therefore* (A.V.) is very variously read and  
placed by the later ones.—*What is meant*  
*by* **thou shalt heap coals of fire?** The expression   
“*coals of fire*” occurs more than  
once in Ps. xviii., of the *divine punitive judgments.*   
Can those be meant here? Clearly not,   
in their bare literal sense. For however  
true it may be, that ingratitude will add to  
the enemy’s list of crimes, and so subject  
him more to God’s punitive judgment, it is  
impossible that to *bring this about* should  
be set as a precept, or a desirable thing  
among Christians. Again, can the expression   
be meant of the *glow and burn of  
shame* which would accompany, even in the  
case of a profane person, the receiving of  
benefits from an enemy? This *may* be  
meant; but is not probable, as not sufficing  
for the majesty of the subject. Merely to  
*make an enemy ashamed of himself,* can  
hardly be upheld as a motive for action.  
I understand the words, ‘*For in thus doing,  
you will be taking the most effectual vengeance:*”   
as effectual as if you heaped coals  
of fire on his head.

**21.**]If you suffered   
yourselves to be provoked to revenge,  
you would be yielding to the enemy,—  
overcome by that which is evil: do not  
thus,—but in this, and in all things, **overcome   
the evil** (in others) **by your good.**

**CHAP. XIII. 1–7.**] *The duty of cheerful  
obedience to the authorities of the state,*  
It has been well observed that *some special  
reason* must have given occasion to these  
exhortations. We can hardly attribute it  
to the seditious spirit of the *Jews at Rome*,  
as their influence in the Christian Church  
there would not be great; indeed, from  
Acts xxviii. the two seem to have been  
remarkably distinct. But disobedience to  
the civil authorities may have arisen from  
mistaken views among the Christians themselves   
as to the nature of Christ’s kingdom,  
and its relation to existing powers of this  
world. And such mistakes would naturally   
be rifest there, where the fountain of  
earthly power was situated: and there also  
best and most effectually met by these  
precepts coming from apostolic authority.  
The way for them is prepared by verses 17  
ff. of the foregoing chapter. 1 Pet. ii. 13 ff.  
is parallel: compare notes there.

**1.**] **submit himself**, i.e. ‘be subject of his  
own free will and accord.’ —**For there is  
no authority** (in heaven or earth—no  
power at all) **except from God: those**