weighty for the difference between the  
Gospel and the Law, that the Law is  
never called *God’s power*, but *light*, or  
*teaching*, in which a man must walk, Ps.  
xxxvi. 10; cxix. 105; Prov. vi. 23; Isa.  
ii. 52.” Umbreit. And the *direction in  
which* this power acts in the gospel is  
**unto or towards salvation**—it is a *healing, saving power*: for as Chrysostom reminds us, there is a power of God *unto  
punishment*, and *unto destruction*, see  
Matt. x. 28.—But *to whom* is this gospel  
the power of God to save? **To every one  
that believeth**. The *universality* implied  
in **every one**, the *condition* necessitated in  
the qualification added, that believeth,  
and the **power of God** acting **unto salvation**, are the great subjects treated of in the former part of this Epistle. *All* are  
proved to be *under sin*, and so *needing  
God’s righteousness* (ch. i. 18–iii. 20),  
and the *entrance* into this righteousness  
is shewn to be *by fait*h (ch. iii. 21–v. 11).  
Then the *power of God* in freeing from  
the dominion of sin and death, and as  
issuing in salvation, is set forth (ch. v. 11–viii. 39). So that if the subject of the Epistle is to be stated in few words, these  
should be chosen: **the Gospel, the power  
of God unto salvation unto every one that  
believeth**. This expresses it better than  
merely ‘*justification by faith*, which is  
in fact only a subordinate part of the  
great theme,—only *the condition necessitated by man’s sinfulness for his entering the state of salvation*: whereas the  
argument extends *beyond this*, to the  
*death unto sin* and *life unto God* and  
*carrying forward of the sanctifying work  
of the Spirit*, from its first fruits even to  
its completion.

**to the Jew first, and also to the Greek**] This is the *Jewish* expression for all mankind, as “ *Greeks and Barbarians*,” ver. 14, is the Greek one.  
The term **Greek** here includes *all Gentiles*.  
The priority here mentioned is not in order  
of time, but is **principally** (comp. ch. ii.  
9) spoken of *national precedence*, in the  
sense in which the Jews were to our Lord  
“*his own*,” John i. 11. Salvation was  
“*from the Jews*,” John iv. 22. See ch.  
ix.5; xi. 24. Not that the Jew has any  
*preference* under the gospel; only he *inherits* and has a *precedence*.

**17.**] An explanation, *how* the gospel is the *power* *of God to salvation*, and how it is so *to the believer* :—because in it **God’s righteousness** (not His *attribute* of righteousness,—‘the righteousness of God,’ but  
righteousness *flowing from*, *and acceptable to Him*) is unfolded, and the more,  
the more we believe. I subjoin De Wette’s note on the words. “The Greek  
and Hebrew words rendered ‘*righteousness*, are taken sometimes for ‘ virtue”  
and ‘piety,’ which men possess or strive after,—sometimes imputatively, for ‘freedom from blame’ or ‘justification’ The  
latter meaning is most usual with Paul:  
‘*righteousness*’ is that which is so in the  
sight of God (ch. ii. 13), the result of His  
justifying forensic Judgment, or of ‘*Imputation*’ (ch. iv. 5). It may certainly be imagined, that a man *might obtain* justification by *fulfilling the law*: in that case  
his righteousness is ‘*righteousness of his  
own*’ (ch. x. 3), a *righteousness springing  
from the law* (Phil. iii. 9). But it is impossible for him to obtain a ‘righteousness of his own,’ which at the same time shall  
avail before God (ch. iii. 20; Gal. ii. 16).  
The Jews not only *have* not fulfilled the  
law (ch. iii. 9–19), but *could not* fulfil it  
(vii. 7 ff.): the Gentiles likewise have  
rendered themselves obnoxious to the  
divine wrath (i. 24–32). God has ordained that the whole race should be included in disobedience. Now if man  
is to become righteous from being unrighteous,—this can only happen by God’s  
grace,—because God *declares him righteous*,  
assumes him to be righteous, *justifies* him  
(iii, 24; Gal. iii, 8):—to justify is not  
only negative, ‘*to acquit*,’ but also positive, ‘*to declare righteous* ;’ but never “to make righteous’ by transformation,  
or imparting of moral strength by which  
moral perfection may be attained. Justification must be taken as the old protestant dogmatists rightly took it, in a  
*forensic* or *imputative* sense. God justifies for Christ’s sake (ch. iii. 22 ff.) on condition of faith in Him as Mediator:  
the result of *His justification is ‘righteousness by faith*, and as He imparts it freely, it is ‘*the righteousness of God*,’  
or *from God* (so it ought to be), Phil.iii. 9. ‘*The righteousness of God*’ is ordinarily taken for *that which is righteousness with God in God’s sight*; compare