preceding verses for imagining that Abraham had gained some advantage according  
to the flesh: which is not the case.

**1. What then**] The Apostle is here contending with those under the law *from  
their own standing-point* : and he follows  
up his assertion that his argument *established the law*, by **what therefore** (‘this  
being conceded,’ ‘seeing that you and I  
are both upholders of the law’) **shall we**  
say, &c. This verse, and the argument  
following, are not a *proof*, but a *consequence*, of *we establish the law*, and are  
therefore introduced, not with *for*, but  
with **then** or **therefore**.

**hath found**]  
viz. *towards his justification*, or more  
strictly, *earned* as his own, to boast of  
The clause, **as pertaining to the flesh**,  
belongs to the verb **hath found**, not to  
the appellation “*our father*”? I have,  
in order to make this clear, transposed  
them. For the course and spirit of the  
argument is not to limit the paternity  
of Abraham to a mere fleshly one, but  
to shew that he was the spiritual father  
of all believers. And the question is not  
one which requires any such distinction  
between his fleshly and spiritual paternity (as in ch. ix. 3,5). his being so,  
w*hat do the words* **as pertaining to the  
flesh** *mean?* They cannot allude to *circumcision*; for that is rendered improbable, not only by the parallel expression “*by works*” (ver. 2) in the *plural*,  
but also by the consideration, that circumcision was no *work* at all, but a *seal of the righteousness which he had by faith* being  
yet uncircumcised (ver. 11),—and by the  
whole course of the argument in the present place, which is not to disprove the  
exclusive privilege of the Jew (that having  
been already done, chapters ii. iii.), but to  
shew that *the father and head of the race  
himself was justified not by works but by  
faith*. Doubtless, in so far as circumcision  
was a mere *work of obedience*, it might be  
in a loose way considered as falling under  
that category: but it came *after* justification, and so is *chronologically* here excluded.

**As pertaining to the flesh** then  
is in contrast to *as pertaining to the  
spirit*,—and refers to *that department  
of our being from which spring works*,  
in contrast with *that in which is the  
exercise of faith*: see ch. viii. 4, 5.

**2.**] **For if Abraham was justified** (not,  
‘were justified,’ as in A. V.: it is assumed,  
asa fact known to all, that he *was justified*  
by some means) **by works, he hath ground  
of boasting** (not expressed here whether  
*in the sight of men,* or *of God*, but taken  
generally : the proposition being assumed,  
‘He that has earned justification by works,  
has whereof to *boast*’). Then in disproof  
of this,—that Abraham has matter of boasting,—whatever *men* might think of him,  
or attribute to him (for example, the perfect keeping of the law, as the Jews did),  
one thing at least is clear, *that he has  
none before* (in the .presence of) *God*.  
This we can prove (ver. 3), **for what saith  
the scripture? Abraham believed God**  
(God’s promise), **and it** (**his believing**) **was  
reckoned unto him for** (ch.ii.26) **righteousness**.—The whole question so much mooted  
between Protestants on the one hand, and  
Romanists, Arminians, and Sovinians on the  
other, as to whether this righteousness  
was reckoned (1) *by means of faith*, being  
*God's righteousness imputed* to the sinner;  
or (2) *on account of faith*, so that God  
made Abraham *righteous on account of  
the merit of his faith*, lies in fact in a  
small compass, if what has gone before  
be properly taken into account. The Apostle has proved Jews and Gentiles to be  
*all under sin*: utterly unable by works of  
their own to attain to righteousness. Now  
*faith*, in the second sense mentioned above,  
is strictly and entirely *a work*, and as such  
would be the *efficient cause* of man’s justification,—which, by what has preceded,  
*it cannot be*. It will therefore follow,  
that it was not the *act of believing* which  
was reckoned to him as a righteous act,  
or on account of which perfect righteousness was laid to his charge, but that the  
*fact of his trusting God to perform His  
promise introduced kim into the blessing promised*. God declared his purpose (Gen.