xii. 3) of blessing all the families of the  
earth in Abraham, and again (Gen. xv. 5)  
that his seed should be as the stars  
heaven, when as yet he had no son, Abra-  
ham *believed this promise*, *and became  
partaker of this blessing*. But this bless-  
ing was, *justification by faith in Christ*.  
Now Abraham could not, in the strict  
‘sense of the words, be justified by faith *in  
Christ*,—nor is it necessary to suppose  
that he directed his faith forward to the  
promised Redeemer in Person; but in so  
far as God’s gracious purpose was revealed  
to him, he grasped it by faith, and that  
righteousness which was implied, so far, in  
it, was imputed to him, Some have said  
(for example, Tholuck) that the parallel  
is incomplete—Abraham’s *faith* having  
been reckoned to him for righteousness, whereas, in our case, *the righteousness of Christ* reckoned to us as our righteousness, *by* faith. But the incompleteness  
lies in the nature of the respective cases.  
In his case, the *righteousness itself* was  
not yet manifested. He believed *implicitly*,  
taking the *promise, with all it involved  
and implied, as true*. This then was his  
way of entering into the promise, and by  
means of his faith was bestowed upon him  
that full justification which that faith  
never apprehended. Thus *his faith itself*,  
the mere fact of implicit trust in God, was  
counted to *him* for righteousness. But  
though *the same righteousness* is imputed  
to us who believe, and by means of faith  
also, it is no longer the mere fact of believing implicitly in God’s truth, but the reception of *Christ Jesus the Lord* by  
faith, which justifies us (see verses 23–25 and note). As it was then the realization  
of God’s words by faith, so now: but *we*  
have the *Person of the Lord Jesus for the  
object of faith*, explicitly revealed: *he had  
not*. In both cases justification is *gratuitous*, and is *by faith*: and so far, which is as far as the argument here requires, the parallel is strict and complete.

**4. to him that worketh** (him that works  
“for hire, that earns wages), **his reward is  
not reckoned in the way of** (as a matter  
of) **grace** (favour), **but of** (as a matter of)  
**debt**] The sentence is a *general* one, not  
with any peculiar reference to Abraham,—except *that after the words* ***in the way of grace*** *we may supply “*as it was to Abraham,” if we will; for this is evidently assumed.

**5.**] **but to him that worketh not** (for hire,—is not a *workman* looking for his *wages*), **but believeth** **on** (casts  
himself in simple trust and humility on)  
**him who justifieth** (accounts just, as in  
ver. 3) **the ungodly** (‘*impious*:’ stronger  
than ‘unrighteous ’—no allusion to Abraham’s having formerly been in idolatry,—for the sentence following on ver. 4, which  
is *general* and of universal application,  
*must also be general,—including of course*Abraham: *impiousness* is the state of all  
men by nature),—**his faith is reckoned for  
righteousness**.—B*y way of grace* is of  
course implied.

**6–8.**] *The same is confirmed by a passage from David*. This  
is not a fresh example, but a confirmation  
of the assertion involved in ver. 5, that a  
man may believe on Him who justifies the  
ungodly, and have his faith reckoned for  
righteousness. The applicability of the  
text depends on the persons alluded to  
*being sinners, and having sin not reckoned  
to them*. The Psalm, strictly speaking, says nothing of the imputation of *righteousness*,—but it is implied by St. Paul,  
that the *remission of sin is equivalent to  
the imputation of righteousness*—that  
there is *no negative state of innocence*—none intermediate between acceptance for righteousness, and rejection for sin.

**6.**] literally, **pronounces the blessedness**,  
‘*the congratulation*’ in allusion perhaps to  
the Heb. form, ‘(O) the blessings of? ...—