**in order that he might he the father of all  
in uncircumcision that believe**] Abraham  
is *the father of the faithful*. But the  
triumph and recognition of that faith  
whereby he was constituted so, was not  
during his circumcision, but during his  
uncircumcision:—therefore *the faithful,  
his descendants, must not be confined to  
the circumcised, but must take in the  
uncircumcised also*.—On the appellation  
father in this sense, Tholuck compares the  
expression Gen. iv. 20; 1 Macc. ii. 54,  
“*Phinees, our father in being zealous and fervent*,” and a saying of Maimonides, “Moses is the father of all the prophets  
who succeeded him.” See also our Lord’s  
saying, John viii. 37, 39. One of the  
Rabbinical books has a sentiment remarkably coincident with that in our text:  
“Abraham is the father of all those who follow his faith.”

**that the righteousness might be reckoned unto them also]** This is  
in *fact* parenthetical, whether brackets  
are used or not; for otherwise the construction from the former to the latter  
word **the father** would not proceed. **The  
righteousness**, namely, that which Abraham’s faith was reckoned as being,—the  
righteousness of God, then hidden though imputed, but now revealed in Jesus Christ.

**12.**] **and** [**that he might be**] **father  
of the circumcision** (the circumcised) **to  
them** (‘for those,’ ‘in the case of those’)  
**who are not only** (physically) **of the circumcision, but to them also who walk  
in the steps of the faith of our father**(speaking here as a Jew) **Abraham** (which  
he had) **while in uncircumcision**.

**13–17.**] *Not through the* LAW, *but through* THE RIGHTEOUSNESS OF FAITH, was THE  
INHERITANCE OF THE WORLD *promised to Abraham: so that not only they who are  
of the law, but they who follow Abraham's faith are* HEIRS OF THIS PROMISE.

**13.**] The argumentation is an expansion of  
the expression “*father of all that believe*”  
above. If these believers are Abraham’s  
seed, then his promised inheritance is  
*theirs*.

**through the law**] not, ‘*under  
the law*,’—nor, ‘*by works of the l*aw—nor, ‘*by the righteousness of the law*:’  
but, **through the law**, so that the law  
should be the *ground*, or *efficient cause*, or  
medium, of the promise. None of these it  
was, as matter of historical fact.—**For not  
through the law was the promise** (made)  
**to Abraham, or to his seed, viz. that he  
should he heir of the world, but by the  
righteousness of faith**. This specification  
of the promise has perplexed most of the  
commentators. The actual promise, Gen.  
(xii, 2, 3) xiii, 14–17; xv. 18; xvii. 8,  
was the possession of the *land of Canaan*.  
But the Rabbis already had seen, and  
St. Paul, who had been brought up in  
their learning, held fast the truth,—that  
much more was intended in the words  
which accompany this promise, “In thee  
(or in thy seed) shall all families of the  
earth be blessed,” than the mere possession  
of Canaan. They distinctly trace the gift  
of the world to Abraham to *this promise*,  
not to the foregoing. They say, “The  
garden is the world, which God delivered  
to Abraham, to whom it was said, ‘*And  
thou shalt be a blessing*” The *inheritance of the world* then is not the possession of Canaan merely, either *literally*, or