as a *type* of a better possession,—but that  
ultimate *lordship over the whole world*which Abraham, as the father of the faithful in all peoples, and Christ, as the of Promise, shall possess: the *former*figuratively indeed and only implicitly,  
*latter* personally and actually. See ch.  
viii. 17; Matt. v.5; 2 Tim. ii. 12; 1 Cor.  
xy. 24.—Another difficulty, that this promise was *made* chronologically *before* the  
reckoning of his faith for righteousness,  
is easily removed by remembering that.  
the (indefinite) making of the promise  
is here treated of as the *whole process  
of its assertion*, during which Abraham’s  
faith was shewn, and the promise continually confirmed.

**14.**] The supposition is now made which ver. 13  
denied, — and its consequences shewn.  
**For if they which are of the law** (who  
belong to the law, not ‘who keep the  
law’) **be heirs** (i.e. inherit by virtue of  
the law; they may be inheritors by the  
righteousness of faith, but not Ly force of  
their legal standing), **faith is** (thereby)  
**made empty** (robbed of its virtue and rendered useless), **and the promise is annulled** (has no longer place). How and  
why so? The Apostle himself immediately gives the reason.

**15.**] **For  
the law worketh** (brings about, gives  
occasion to) **wrath** (which from its v  
nature excludes *promise*, which is an  
of grace,—and *faith*, which is an attribute  
of *confidence*):—**but where** (the “*for*” in  
the A. V. has perhaps been introduced to  
suit the idea of the second clanse rendering  
a reason for the first) **there is no law** (lit.  
‘*where the law is not*’), **neither is there  
transgression**. “ We should rather expect  
(says De Wette) the affirmative clause,  
\* And where the law is, there is transgression:’ but the negative refers to the time  
  
before the Mosaic law, when there was no  
transgression and therefore also no wrath.”  
Yes; but not because there was *no* transgression then; the purpose of the Apostle  
here is not to deny the existence of the law  
of God written in the heart (which itself  
brings in the knowledge of sin) before  
Moses, but to shew that no promise of inheritance can be by the law, because the  
property of the law the more it is promulgated, to *reveal transgression* more,—*not to unfold grace*. So that *comparatively* (see notes on ch. vii.) there was no  
transgression before the law of Moses ; and  
if we conceive a state in which the law  
should he *altogether absent*, whether written  
or unwritten (as in the brute creation), there  
would he *no transgression whatever*.—But  
observe (see ch. v.12–14) that this reasoning does not touch the doctrine of the original taint of our nature in Adam,—only  
referring to the discrimination of acts,  
words, and thoughts by the conscience *in  
the light of the law*: for TRANSGRESSION  
is not *natural corruption*, but *an act of  
transgression*: nor does the Apostle here  
deny the former, even in the imaginable  
total absence of the law of God.

**16.**] **For this** (viz. the following) **cause it** (no  
word is supplied in the original; but we  
must understand the *inheritance*,— not  
the *promise*; the promise was not strictly  
speaking *of faith*; nor must we supply  
*they were*, meaning the heirs, who although  
they might fairly be said to be *of faith*,  
could hardly be without harshness described  
as being *by grace*) **was of faith, that it  
might be** (strictly the *purpose*;—not, ‘so  
that it was’) **by** (**according to**) **grace** (free  
unmerited favour. As the *law*, bringing  
the *knowledge of guilt*, works *wrath*,—so  
the *promise*, awakening *faith*, manifests  
God’s *free grace*,—the end for which it