

21 But now the righteousness of God is manifested without  
 22 the law, being attested by the Law and the Prophets; Even  
 the righteousness of God, by the faith of Jesus Christ, to  
 23 all and upon all that believe: for there is no difference: For  
 all have sinned, and are fallen short of the glory of God;  
 24 And are justified freely by his grace through the redemption  
 25 which is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth a pro-  
 pitiation through faith in his blood, for a demonstration  
 of his righteousness by the remission of past sins, through  
 26 the forbearance of God: For a demonstration, *I say*, of his

wholly ignorant of those that spring from faith. *For by the law is only the knowledge of sin*—But no deliverance either from the guilt or power of it.

Verse 21. *But now the righteousness of God*—That is, the manner of becoming righteous which God hath appointed. *Without the law*—Without that previous obedience which the law requires; without reference to the law, or dependence on it. *Is manifested*—In the gospel. *Being attested by the Law itself, and by the Prophets*—By all the promises in the Old Testament.

Verse 22. *To all*—The Jews. *And upon all*—The gentiles. *That believe: for there is no difference*—Either as to the need of justification, or the manner of it.

Verse 23. *For all have sinned*—In Adam, and in their own persons; by a sinful nature, sinful tempers, and sinful actions. *And are fallen short of the glory of God*—The supreme end of man; short of his image on earth, and the enjoyment of him in heaven.

Verse 24. *And are justified*—Pardoned and accepted. *Freely*—Without any merit of their own. *By his grace*—Not their own righteousness or works. *Through the redemption*—The price Christ has paid. *Freely by his grace*—One of these expressions might have served to convey the apostle's meaning; but he doubles his assertion, in order to give us the fullest conviction of the truth, and to impress us with a sense of its peculiar importance. It is not possible to find words that should more absolutely exclude all consideration of our own works and obedience, or more emphatically ascribe the whole of our justification to free, unmerited goodness.

Verse 25. *Whom God hath set forth*—Before angels and men. *A propitiation*—To appease an offended God. But if, as some teach, God never was offended, there was no need of this propitiation. And, if so, Christ died in vain. *To declare his righteousness*—To demonstrate not only his clemency, but his justice; even that vindictive justice whose essential character and principal office is, to punish sin. *By the remission of past sins*—All the sins antecedent to their believing.

Verse 26. *For a demonstration of his righteousness*—Both of his justice and mercy. *That he might be just*—Showing his justice on his own Son. *And yet the merciful justifier of every one that believeth in Jesus. That he*

righteousness in this present time : that he might be just, and yet the justifier of him that believeth in Jesus.

27 Where *is* boasting then ? It is excluded. By what law ?  
 28 of works ? Nay : but by the law of faith. We conclude  
 then that a man is justified by faith without the works of the  
 29 law. *Is God the God* of the Jews only, and not also of the  
 30 gentiles ? Surely of the gentiles also : Seeing *it is* one God,  
 who will justify the circumcision by faith, and the uncir-  
 31 cumcision through *the same* faith. Do we then make void  
 the law through faith ? God forbid : yea, we establish the law.

CHAP. IV. 1 What shall we say then ? that our father  
 2 Abraham hath found according to the flesh ? If Abraham

*might be just*—Might evidence himself to be strictly and inviolably righteous in the administration of his government, even while he is the merciful justifier of the sinner *that believeth in Jesus*. The attribute of justice must be preserved inviolate ; and inviolate it is preserved, if there was a real infliction of punishment on our Saviour. On this plan all the attributes harmonize ; every attribute is glorified, and not one superseded, no, nor so much as clouded.

Verse 27. *Where is the boasting then of the Jew against the gentile ? It is excluded. By what law ? of works ?* Nay—This would have left room for boasting. *But by the law of faith*—Since this requires all, without distinction, to apply as guilty and helpless sinners, to the free mercy of God in Christ. *The law of faith* is that divine constitution which makes faith, not works, the condition of acceptance.

Verse 28. *We conclude then that a man is justified by faith*—And even by this, not as it is a work, but as it receives Christ ; and, consequently, has something essentially different from all our works whatsoever.

Verse 29. *Surely of the gentiles also*—As both nature and the scriptures show.

Verse 30. *Seeing it is one God who*—Shows mercy to both, and by the very same means.

Verse 31. *We establish the law*—Both the authority, purity, and the end of it ; by defending that which the law attests ; by pointing out Christ, the end of it ; and by showing how it may be fulfilled in its purity.

Chapter iv. Having proved it by argument, he now proves by example, and such example as must have greater weight with the Jews than any other : 1. That justification is by faith : 2. That it is free for the gentiles.

Verse 1. *That our father Abraham hath found*—Acceptance with God. *According to the flesh*—That is, by works.

Verse 2. The meaning is, If Abraham had been justified by works, he

was justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but *he* 3 *hath* not in the sight of God. For what saith the scripture?

\* Abraham believed God, and it was imputed to him for 4 righteousness. Now to him that worketh, the reward is not 5 reckoned of grace, but of debt. But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his 6 faith is imputed to him for righteousness. So David also

\* Gen. xv. 6.

would have had room to glory. But he had not room to glory. Therefore he was not justified by works.

Verse 3. *Abraham believed God*—That promise of God concerning the numerousness of his seed, Gen. xv. 5, 7; but especially the promise concerning Christ, Gen. xii. 3, through whom all nations should be blessed. *And it was imputed to him for righteousness*—God accepted him as if he had been altogether righteous.

Verse 4. *Now to him that worketh*—All that the law requires, the reward is no favour, but an absolute debt.

These two examples are selected and applied with the utmost judgment and propriety. Abraham was the most illustrious pattern of piety among the Jewish patriarchs. David was the most eminent of their kings. If then neither of these was justified by his own obedience, if they both obtained acceptance with God, not as upright beings who might claim it, but as sinful creatures who must implore it, the consequence is glaring. It is such as must strike every attentive understanding, and must affect every individual person.

Verse 5. *But to him that worketh not*—It being impossible he should without faith. *But believeth, his faith is imputed to him for righteousness*—Therefore God's affirming of Abraham, that faith was imputed to him for righteousness, plainly shows that he worked not; or, in other words, that he was not justified by works, but by faith only. Hence we see plainly how groundless that opinion is, that holiness or sanctification is previous to our justification. For the sinner, being first convinced of his sin and danger by the Spirit of God, stands trembling before the awful tribunal of divine justice; and has nothing to plead, but his own guilt, and the merits of a Mediator. Christ here interposes; justice is satisfied; the sin is remitted, and pardon is applied to the soul, by a divine faith wrought by the Holy Ghost, who then begins the great work of inward sanctification. Thus God justifies the ungodly, and yet remains just, and true to all his attributes! But let none hence presume to "continue in sin;" for to the impenitent, God "is a consuming fire." *On him that justifieth the ungodly*—If a man could possibly be made holy before he was justified, it would entirely set his justification aside; seeing he could not, in the very nature of the thing, be justified if he were not, at that very time, ungodly.

Verse 6. *So David also*—David is fitly introduced after Abraham, because he also received and delivered down the promise. *Afirmeth*—A

affirmeth the happiness of the man, to whom God imputeth  
 7 righteousness without works, \* Happy are they whose iniqui-  
 8 ties are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. Happy is  
 9 the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin. Cometh  
 this happiness then on the circumcision *only*, or on the  
 uncircumcision also? for we say that faith was imputed to  
 10 Abraham for righteousness. How was it then imputed?  
 when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in  
 11 circumcision, but in uncircumcision. And he received the  
 sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith  
 which *he had* in uncircumcision: that he might be the  
 father of all who believe in uncircumcision; that righteous-  
 12 ness may be imputed to them also: And the father of the

\* Psalm xxxii. 1, 2.

man is justified by faith alone, and not by works. *Without works*—That is, without regard to any former good works supposed to have been done by him.

Verse 7. *Happy are they whose sins are covered*—With the veil of divine mercy. If there be indeed such a thing as happiness on earth, it is the portion of that man *whose iniquities are forgiven*, and who enjoys the manifestation of that pardon. Well may he endure all the afflictions of life with cheerfulness, and look upon death with comfort. O let us not contend against it, but earnestly pray that this happiness may be ours!

Verse 9. *This happiness*—Mentioned by Abraham and David. *On the circumcision*—Those that are circumcised only. *Faith was imputed to Abraham for righteousness*—This is fully consistent with our being justified, that is, pardoned and accepted by God upon our believing, for the sake of what Christ hath done and suffered. For though this, and this alone, be the meritorious cause of our acceptance with God, yet faith may be said to be “imputed to us for righteousness,” as it is the sole condition of our acceptance. We may observe here, forgiveness, not imputing sin, and imputing righteousness, are all one.

Verse 10. *Not in circumcision*—Not after he was circumcised; for he was justified before Ishmael was born, Gen. xv.; but he was not circumcised till Ishmael was thirteen years old, xvii. 25.

Verse 11. *And*—After he was justified. *He received the sign of circumcision*—Circumcision, which was a sign or token of his being in covenant with God. *A seal*—An assurance on God’s part, that he accounted him righteous, upon his believing, before he was circumcised. *Who believe in uncircumcision*—That is, though they are not circumcised.

Verse 12. *And the father of the circumcision*—Of those who are circumcised, and believe as Abraham did. To those who believe not, Abraham is not a father, neither are they his seed.

circumcision to them who not only are of the circumcision, but also walk in the footsteps of that faith of our father  
 13 Abraham, which he had in uncircumcision. For the promise, that he should be the heir of the world, *was* not to Abraham, or to his seed, by the law, but by the righteousness  
 14 of faith. For if they who are of the law *are* heirs, faith  
 15 is made void, and the promise of no effect: Because the law worketh wrath: for where no law is, *there is* no transgression.  
 16 Therefore *it is* of faith, that *it might be* of grace; that the promise might be firm to all the seed; not only to that which is of the law, but to that also which is of the faith  
 17 of Abraham; who is the father of us all, (As it is written, \* I have appointed thee a father of many nations,) before  
 18 God in whom he believed, as quickening the dead, and calling the things that are not as though they were. Who

\* Gen. xvii. 5.

Verse 13. *The promise, that he should be the heir of the world*—Is the same as that he should be “the father of all nations,” namely, of those in all nations who receive the blessing. The whole world was promised to him and them conjointly. Christ is the heir of the world, and of all things; and so are all Abraham’s seed, all that believe in him with the faith of Abraham.

Verse 14. *If they only who are of the law*—Who have kept the whole law. *Are heirs, faith is made void*—No blessing being to be obtained by it; and so the promise is of no effect.

Verse 15. *Because the law*—Considered apart from that grace, which though it was in fact mingled with it, yet is no part of the legal dispensation, is so difficult, and we so weak and sinful, that, instead of bringing us a blessing, it only *worketh wrath*; it becomes to us an occasion of wrath, and exposes us to punishment as transgressors. *Where there is no law* in force, there can be *no transgression* of it.

Verse 16. *Therefore it*—The blessing. *Is of faith, that it might be of grace*—That it might appear to flow from the free love of God, and that the promise might be firm, sure, and effectual, to all the spiritual seed of Abraham; not only Jews, but gentiles also, if they follow his faith.

Verse 17. *Before God*—Though before men nothing of this appeared, those nations being then unborn. *As quickening the dead*—The dead are not dead to him; and even the things that are not, are before God. *And calling the things that are not*—Summoning them to rise into being, and appear before him. The seed of Abraham did not then exist; yet God said, “So shall thy seed be.” A man can say to his servant actually existing, Do this; and he doeth it: but God saith to the light, while it does not exist, Go forth; and it goeth.

Verses 18—21. The Apostle shows the power and excellence of that

against hope believed in hope, that he should be the father of many nations, according to that which was spoken, \* So shall thy seed be. And not being weak in faith, he considered not his own body now dead, being about an hundred years old, nor the deadness of Sarah's womb: He staggered not at the promise of God through unbelief; but was strengthened in faith, giving glory to God; And being fully assured that, what he had promised, he was able also to perform. And therefore it was imputed to him for righteousness. Now it was not written on his account only, that it was imputed unto him; But on ours also, to whom it will be imputed, if we believe on him who raised up Jesus our Lord from the dead; Who was delivered for our offences, and was raised for our justification.

CHAP. V. 1 Therefore being justified by faith, we have

\* Gen. xv. 5.

faith to which he ascribes justification. *Who against hope*—Against all probability, believed and hoped in the promise. The same thing is apprehended both by faith and hope; by faith, as a thing which God has spoken; by hope, as a good thing which God has promised to us. *So shall thy seed be*—Both natural and spiritual, as the stars of heaven for multitude.

Verse 20. *Giving God the glory* of his truth and power.

Verse 23. *On his account only*—To do personal honour to him.

Verse 24. *But on ours also*—To establish us in seeking justification by faith, and not by works; and to afford a full answer to those who say that, “to be justified by works means only, by Judaism; to be justified by faith means, by embracing Christianity, that is, the system of doctrines so called.” Sure it is that Abraham could not in this sense be justified either by faith or by works; and equally sure, that David (taking the words thus) was justified by works, and not by faith. *Who raised up Jesus from the dead*—As he did in a manner both Abraham and Sarah. *If we believe on him who raised up Jesus*—God the Father therefore is the proper object of justifying faith. It is observable, that St. Paul here, in speaking both of our faith and of the faith of Abraham, puts a part for the whole. And he mentions that part, with regard to Abraham, which would naturally affect the Jews most.

Verse 25. *Who was delivered*—To death. *For our offences*—As an atonement for them. *And raised for our justification*—To empower us to receive that atonement by faith.

Verse 1. *Being justified by faith*—This is the sum of the preceding chapters. *We have peace with God*—Being enemies to God no longer,