prosperous effect of a worse cause, to the  
more prosperous effect of a better cause.”  
—**But** (‘taking for granted, that’—as  
in last verse—taking for granted the historical   
fact, that the stumble of the Jews  
has been coincident with the admission of  
the Gentiles) **if their trespass is the riches  
of the world** (the *occasion* of that wealth,  
—the wealth itselt being the participation  
in the unsearchable riches of Christ), **and**  
(this latter clause parallel to and explanatory   
of the less plainly expressed one before  
it) **their diminishing, the riches of the  
Gentiles, how much more** **(shall) their  
fulness (be all this)?**—On the words here  
used, **diminishing** and **fulness**, much question   
has been raised. I have taken both  
as answering strictly to the comparison  
here before the Apostle’s mind, viz. that  
of impoverishing and enriching, the  
possessives **their**, and **of the world, of  
the Gentiles**, as *subjective: ‘if their impoverishment   
be the wealth of the Gentiles,   
how much more shall their enrichment  
be!’*—But several other interpretations are  
possible. (1) **Diminishing** may mean, as in  
1 Cor. vi. 7, *degradation*, and **fulness**  
would then be *re-exaltation* to the former  
measure of favour,—or perhaps ‘their *completion*,’   
‘their highest degree of favour.’  
(2) If we regard the meaning of “*fulness*”  
in ver. 25, we shall be tempted here to  
understand it ‘*full number,’* and **similarly   
diminishing**, ‘*small number.*’ So  
the majority of Commentators. Thus the  
argument will stand: ‘If their unbelief  
(i.e. of one part of them) is the world’s  
wealth, and their small number (i.e. of  
believers, the other part of them), the  
Wealth of the Gentiles, how much more their  
full (restored) number!’ i.e. as Olshansen  
explains it, ‘If so few Jews can do so much  
for the Gentile world, what will not the  
whole number do?’ But thus we shall lose  
the argument, from the less to the greater,  
—‘if their *sin* has done so much, how much  
more their *conversion?*’ unless indeed it  
be said that reduction of numbers *implies*  
a national trespass. Besides, it can hardly  
be shewn that the original word rendered  
**diminishing** will bear this meaning of ‘a  
small number.’ (3) Tholuck, from whom  
mostly this note is taken, notices at length  
the view of Olshausen, after Origen, that  
the idea of a *definite number of the elect*  
is here in the Apostle’s mind,—that the  
falling off of the Jews produces a deficiency  
in the number, which is filled up by the  
elect from the Gentiles, as ver. 25: understanding   
by **fulness** both there and  
here, if I take his meaning aright, the  
*number required to fill up the roll of  
the elect,* whether of Jews, as here, or  
Gentiles, as there. Tholuck, while he  
concedes the legitimacy of the *idea* of a  
*fulness of the elect,* maintains, and rightly,  
that in this section *no such idea is brought*  
*forward:* and that it would not have  
been intended, without *some more definite  
expression of it than we now find.*—I  
have thought it best, as above, considering  
the very various meanings and difficulty of  
the word **fulness**, to keep here to that  
which seems to be indicated by the immediate   
context, which is, besides, the primitive   
meaning of the word.—It must be  
noticed, that the fact, of *Israel being the  
chosen people of God,* lies at the root of  
all this argument. Israel is *the nation,*  
the covenant people,—the vehicle of God's  
gracious purposes to mankind. Israel,  
nationally, is deposed from present favour.  
That very deposition is, however, accompanied   
by an outpouring of God’s riches of  
mercy on the Gentiles; not as rivals to  
Israel, but *still considered as further from  
God, formally and nationally, than Israel.*  
If then the *disgrace of Israel* has had such  
a blessed accompaniment, how much more  
blessed a one shall *Israel’s honour* bring  
with it, when His own people shall once  
more be set as a praise in the midst of the  
earth, and the glory of the nation.

**13.**] ‘Why, in an argument concerning the  
*Jews,* dwell so much on the reference to the  
*Gentiles* discernible in the divine economy  
regarding Israel? Why make it appear  
as if the treatment of God’s chosen people  
were regulated not by a consideration of  
*them,* but of the less favoured Gentiles?’  
The present verse gives an answer to this.  
question.—**But** (such, and not “*for,*” is  
the reading of our most ancient MSS. and  
versions. The disjunctive conjunction introduces   
an apology for the foregoing  
verse: i.e. “in thus speaking, let it be