as a heave-offering to the Lord, and so  
sanctified for use the rest: see the reference   
where the same words occur):—  
**and if the root be holy, so also are the  
branches.**—*Who are the* **firstfruit** *and  
the* **root?** First of all, there is no impropriety   
in the two words applying to  
the *same thing*. For though, the branches  
being *evolved from the* **root**, it rather  
answers to the *lump* than to the *firstfruit*,   
and though the firstfruit succeeds  
the lump in time, while the root precedes  
the branches,—yet *the holiness is the  
point of comparison*, and in *holiness* the  
*firstfruit* precedes and gives existence to  
the *lump*. This being so, (1) the *firstfruit*   
and *root* have generally been taken  
to represent the *patriarchs*; and I believe   
rightly (except that perhaps it would  
be more strict correct to say, *Abraham  
himself*). The words, “*beloved for the  
fathers’ sake,*” in ver. 28, place this reference   
almost beyond doubt. Origen explains   
the *root* to be *our Lord*. But  
He is Himself *a branch*, by descent from  
Abraham and David (Isa. xi. 1; Matt. i. 1),  
if genealogically considered ; and if mystically,   
*the whole tree* (John xv. 1). De  
Wette prefers to take as the firstfruit and  
root, the *ideal theocracy* founded on the  
patriarchs,—the *true, faithful children* of  
the patriarchs, and as the branches, those  
united by mere external relationship to  
these others. This he does, because in the  
*common acceptation,* the *branches* who are  
cut off ought to be severed *from their physical   
connexion* with Abraham, &c., which  
they *are not*. This objection I do not conceive   
applicable here: because, as we see  
evidently from ver. 23, the severing and  
re-engrafting are types, not of *genealogical*  
disunion and reunion, but of *spiritual.*  
Meanwhile, this view appears less simple  
than the ordinary one, which, as I hope to  
shew, is borne out by the whole passage.  
(2) Then, *who are indicated by the* **lump**  
*and the* **branches?** ISRAEL, considered  
as the people of God. The lump, which  
has received its *holiness* from the *firstfruit*,   
is Israel, beloved for the father’  
sakes: the assemblage of branches, evolved  
from Abraham, and partaking of his holiness.   
But one thing must be especially  
borne in mind. As Abraham himself had  
an outer and an inner life, so have the  
branches. They have an *outer life*, derived   
from Abraham by *physical descent*.  
Of this, *no cutting off can deprive them.* It  
may be compared to the very organization  
of the wood itself, which subsists even after  
its separation from the tree. But they  
have, while they remain in the tree, an *inner  
life,* nourished by the circulating sap, by  
virtue of which they are constituted *living  
parts* of the tree: see our Lord’s parable  
of the vine and the branches, John xv. 1 ff.  
It is of *this life*, that their severance from  
the tree deprives them : it is *this life,* which  
they will *re-acquire*, if grafted in again.—  
The *holiness* then here spoken of, consists  
in their *dedication to God as a people*—  
in their being *physically evolved from a  
holy root.* This peculiar *holiness* (see  
1 Cor. vii. 14, where the children of one  
Christian parent are similarly called *holy*)  
renders their *restoration to their own  
stock* a matter, not of wonder and difficulty,   
but of reasonable hope and probability.—I   
notice in passing, that  
those expositors who do not hold a restoration   
of the Jewish people to national preeminence,   
find this passage exceedingly in  
their way, if we may judge by their explanations   
of this *holiness*. E.g. Mr. Ewbank  
remarks: ‘Holy they are, inasmuch as there  
is *no decree against their restoration* to their  
place of life and fruitfulness.’ Surely this  
isa new meaning of ‘holy :’ the same would  
be true of a Hottentot: in his case, too,  
there is no decree against his reception into  
a place (and in Mr. E.’s view, the restoration   
of the Jew is nothing more) of life and  
fruitfulness in the Church of God.

**17.**] **But** (introduces a hypothesis involving  
a seeming inconsistency with the *holiness*  
just mentioned) **if some of the branches** (the  
word **some** depreciates the number, in order  
to check the Gentile pride) **were broken out**  
(so literally: broken off from the tree), **and  
thou** (a Gentile believer)**, being a wild olive**  
(i.e. a sprout or branch of a wild olive),  
**wast grafted in** (there is an apparent  
difficulty here: that the Apostle *reverses*  
the natural process in grafting. It is the  
*wilding,* in practice, which is the *stock,*  
and the graft inserted is a sprout of the