last verse) **the goodness and the severity  
of God:—towards those who fell** (see on  
ver. 11.—Here they who fell are opposed  
to the person addressed, the figure being  
for the moment dropped: for the expression   
“*who fell*” can hardly be used of  
the *branches*, but of *men*), **severity; but  
toward thee, God’s** (this genitive, omitted  
in the received text, is found in all our  
oldest MSS. The repetition is quite in  
the manner of the Apostle: see 1 Cor. i.  
24, 25) **goodness, if thou continue in his  
goodness; for** (we supply, **otherwise**: i.e.  
assuming that thou dost *not* continue in  
that goodness) **thou also shalt be cut off.**

**23.**] **And they moreover, if they  
continue not in their unbelief, shall be  
grafted in: for God is able to graft them  
in again.** (Some represent this last clause  
as implying, that God’s power to graft  
them in again has always been the same,  
but has waited for their change of mind,  
to act. ‘But surely the other interpretation   
is far better, viz. that the Apostle  
obscurely includes in the term “*grafting  
in,*” the removal of their unbelief and the  
awakening of faith, and this last especially  
he looks for from above:’—for the *power*  
of God would not be put forward, if the  
other were the meaning.)

**24.**] **For**  
(proof that, besides God’s undoubted power  
to re-engraft them, the idea of their being  
so re-engrafted is not an unreasonable one)  
**if** THOU **wast cut off from the olive tree  
which is by nature wild, and wast grafted  
contrary to nature into a good olive tree:  
how much more shall these, which be  
the natural branches, be grafted into  
their own olive tree?** It is a question,  
as Tholuck remarks, whether **by nature**  
and **contrary to nature** denote merely  
*growth in the natural manner and growth*(by engratting) *in an unnatural* (i. e. artificial)   
*manner*,—or that the *wild* is the  
*nature of the Gentile,* and the *good olive*  
*that of the Jew,* so that the sense would  
be—‘If thou wert cut out of the wild  
olive which is thine naturally, and wert  
engrafted contrary to (thy) nature into  
the good olive, how much more shall these,  
the natural branches,’ &c. But then the  
latter part of the sentence does not correspond   
with the former. We should then  
expect it to stand, ‘How much more  
these, who shall, agreeably to (their) nature,   
be grafted, &c. Tholuck describes  
the question as being between a comparison  
of *engrafting* and *not engrafting*, and one  
of engrafting the *congruous* and the *incongruous:*   
and, on the above ground, decides  
in favour of the former,—**by nature** signifying   
merely *natural growth*, **contrary  
to nature**, *unnatural growth,* i.e. the  
growth of the *grafted scion.* But however   
this may fit the *former* part of the  
sentence, it surely cannot satisfy the requirements   
of the *latter*, where the *natural  
branches* are described as being *engrafted*  
(which would be in this view *contrary to  
nature*) into *their own* olive tree. We  
must at least assume a mixture of the two  
meanings, the antithesis of *by nature* and  
*contrary to nature*, being rather verbal  
than logical,—as is so common in the  
writings of the Apostle. Thus in the  
former case, that of the Gentile, the fact  
of *natural growth* is set against that of  
*engrafted growth:* whereas in the latter,