*verbatim* thus uttered. See note on Matt.  
v. 22.

**49.]** In order to understand  
this difficult verse, it will be necessary first  
to examine its connexion and composition.  
(1) What is **for**? It connects it with the  
solemn assertions in vv. 43—48, **it is better  
for thee**…, and furnishes a *reason why* it  
**is** better for us to cut off and cast away, &c.

**every one** then is to be taken   
absolutely: referring back both to the **thee**,  
and the their above—**every sacrifice is**  
(not *opposed* to [Meyer], but) *parallel*  
*with* **every one**, and **and** equivalent to **just  
as**. (2) This being stated, let us now   
enquire into the symbolic terms used. FIRE,  
is the *refiner’s fire* of Mal. iii. 2, to which  
indeed there seems to be a reference; the  
fire of Matt. iii. 11 and Acts ii. 3; of  
Ezek. xxviii. 14 (see my Hulsean Lectures  
for 1841, pp 9–12). Fire is *the symbol  
of the divine purity and presence:*—our  
God is a *consuming fire*, not only to his  
foes, but to his people: but in *them*, the  
fire shall burn up only what is impure and  
requires purifying out, 1 Cor. iii. 13:  
1 Pet. i. 7; iv. 12, 17. This very fire  
shall be to them as *a preserving salt*,  
The SALT of the covenant of God (Lev.  
ii. 18) was to be mixed with *every   
sacrifice*; and it is with fire that *all men are to  
be salted*. This fire is the divine purity  
and judgment *in the covenant*, whose   
promise is, ‘I will dwell among them.’ And  
in and among this purifying fire shall the  
people of God ever walk and rejoice   
everlastingly. Rev. xxi. 23. This is the right  
understanding of Isa. xxxiii. 14, 15, ‘Who  
among us shall dwell with the devouring  
fire? &c. He that walketh in   
righteousness,’ &c. And thus the connexion with  
the preceding verses is,—‘it is better for  
thee to cut off,’ &c.—‘for it is *part of the  
salting of thee, the living sacrifice* (Rom.  
xii. 1), that every offence and scandal  
must be burnt out of thee before thou  
canst enter into life.’ It is perhaps   
necessary to add that this is simply the   
explanation of our Lord’s words as they  
stand, in their symbolism and connexion.  
When Mr. Elliott objects to it as a   
‘fearful comment,’ he has to do with *those  
words*, not with me. Surely, nothing but  
the most amazing power of   
misunderstanding can suppose the explanation   
inconsistent with such texts as Rom. viii.  
1, 34: 1 John ii. 1, 2.

**50.]** The connexion of this (elsewhere said in other  
references, Matt. v. 13: Luke xiv. 34) is  
now plain. If this fire which is to purify  
and act as a preserving salt to you, have,  
from the nullity and vapidity of the grace  
of the covenant in you, *no such power*,—it  
can only *consume*—the salt has lost its  
savour—the covenant is void—you will be  
cast out, as it is elsewhere added, and tho  
fire will be no longer the fire of *purification*,   
but of *wrath eternal*.

I will  
just add that the interpretation of the  
sacrifice as the *condemned*—and the fire  
and salt as *eternal fire*,—except in the  
case of the salt having lost its savour, *is  
contrary to the whole symbolism of*