*water* by means of *salt* (2 Kings ii. 20),  
and the ordinary use of salt for culinary  
purposes is to *prevent putrefaction*: so  
(see Gen. xviii. 23—33) are the righteous,  
the people of God, in this corrupt world.

It hardly seems necessary to find  
instances of the *actual occurrence* of salt  
losing its savour, for this is merely hypothetical. Yet it is worth noticing,  
that Maundrell, in his travels, found salt in  
the Valley of Salt, near Gehul, which had  
the appearance, but not the taste, having  
lost it by exposure to the elements (see  
the citation below);—and that Schǒttgen  
maintains that a kind of bitumen from the  
Dead Sea was called ‘salt of Sodom,’ and  
was used to sprinkle the sacrifices in the  
temple; which salt was used, when its  
savour was gone, to strew the temple  
pavement, that the priests might not slip. This,  
however, is but poorly made out by him.  
Dr. Thomson, ‘The Land and the Book,’  
p. 381, mentions a case which came under  
his own observation: where a merchant of  
Sidon had stored up a quantity of salt in  
cottages with earthern floors, in consequence of which the salt was spoiled, and  
Dr. T. saw “large quantities of it literally  
thrown into the street, to be trodden under  
foot of men and beasts.” He adds, “It is  
a well-known fact that the salt of this  
country, when in contact with the ground,  
or exposed to rain and sun, does become  
insipid and useless. From the manner in  
which it is gathered, much earth and  
other impurities are necessarily collected  
with it. Not a little of it is so impure  
that it cannot be used at all: and such  
salt soon effloresces and turns to dust—  
not to fruitful soil, however. It is not only  
good for nothing itself, but it actually destroys all fertility wherever it is thrown:  
and this is the reason why it is cast into  
the street.”

**the earth** means *mankind, and all creation*: but with a more  
*inward* reference, as to the working of the  
salt, than in “*the world,*” ver. 14, where  
the *light* is something *outwardly shewn*.

**shall it be salted**] it, i.e.  
the salt. The sense is: ‘If you become  
untrue to your high calling, and spiritually  
effete and corrupted, there are no ordinary means by which you can be re-converted  
and brought back to your former state,  
inasmuch as you have no teachers and  
guides over you, but ought yourselves to  
be teachers and guides to others.’ But  
we must not from this suppose that our  
Lord denies all repentance to those who  
have thus fallen: the scope of His saying  
must be taken into account, which is not  
to crush the fallen, but to quicken the  
sense of duty, and cause His disciples to  
walk worthily of their calling. (See Heb.  
vi. 4–6, and note on Mark ix. 49, 50.)

The *salt in the sacrifice* is the  
type of God’s *covenant of sanctification,*  
whereby this earth shall be again hallowed  
for Him: His people are the *instruments*,  
in His hand, of this wholesome salting: all  
His servants in general, but the teachers  
and ministers of His covenant in particular.  
There docs not appear to be any allusion  
to *ecclesiastical excommunication*.

**14. the light of the world**] And yet only  
in a lower and derivative sense; Christ  
Himself being “*the true light which lighteth every man,*” John i. 9; “the light of  
the world,” viii. 12. His ministers are  
“*candles,*” John v. 35, and “lights,” Phil.  
ii. 15, *receiving* their light, and only burning *for a time*: lights *lighted*, whereas He  
is Light *lighting*, as Augustine. And  
here too, light in this verse = candle in  
ver. 15, where the comparison is resumed.  
so also Eph. v. 8:—**light**, *as partaking of  
His Light*: for every thing lighted (see  
note, ib. ver. 13) is light.

**cannot be hid**] Of course it is possible that  
our Lord may have had *some town* before  
Him thus situated, but *not Bethulia*,  
whose very existence is probably fabulous, being only mentioned in the apocryphal book of Judith. Recent travellers,  
as Dr. Stanley and Thomson (Sinai and  
Palestine, p. 429: The Land and the Book,  
p. 273), have thought that, notwithstanding the fact shewn by Robinson, that the  
actual city of Safed was not in existence  
at this time, some ancient portion of it,  
at all events its fortress, which is ‘as aged  
in appearance as the most celebrated ruins  
in the country’ (Thomson), may have been  
before the eye of our Lord as He spoke.  
It is ‘placed high on a bold spur of the  
Galilean Anti-Lebanon,’ and answers well  
to the description of a city ‘lying on the  
mountain top.’ ‘The only other in view  
would be the village and fortress of Tabor,  
distinctly visible from the mount of Beatitudes, though not from the hills on the lake side. Either or both of these would