*entered, sprung up, and come to maturity:  
or while it is so coming*.—(2) in APPARENT  
DEGREE. The climax is *apparently* from  
*bad* to *better*;—the first *understand* not:  
the second *understand and* feel: the third  
*understand, feel, and practise*. But also  
(3) in REAL DEGREE, from *bad* to *worse*.  
Less awful is the state of those who *understand not* the word and lose *it immediately*,  
than that of those who *feel it, receive it  
with joy*, and in time of trial *fall away*:  
lees awful again this last, than that of  
those who *understand, feel, and practise*,  
but are *fruitless and impure*. It has  
been noticed also that the first is more the  
fault of *careless inattentive* CHILDHOOD;  
the second of *ardent shallow* YOUTH; the third of *worldly self-seeking* AGE. (II)  
That these classes do *not* EXCLUDE *one  
another*. They are great general divisions, the outer circles of which fall into  
one another, as they very likely might in the field itself, in their different combinations.

**23.**] Here also the *fourth*  
class must not be understood as a decided  
well-marked company, excluding all the  
rest. For the soil is *not good by nature*:  
the natural man receiveth not the things  
of the Spirit of God; but every predisposition to receive them is of God:—even  
the shallow soil covering the rock, even  
the thorny soil, received its power to take  
in and vivify the seed, from God. So that  
divine grace is the enabling, vivifying,  
cleansing power throughout: and these  
sown on the good land are no naturally  
good, amiable, or pure class, but those  
prepared by divine grace—receptive, by  
granted receptive power. The sowing is  
not necessarily the *first* that has ever  
taken place: the field has been and is  
continually resown, so that the *care of  
the husbandman* is presupposed. Again,  
no irresistible grace or absolute decree of  
God must be dreamt of here. God working not barely *upon*, but *with* man, is, as we said above, the *mystery of the Kingdom* here declared,—see Jer. iv. 3: Hosea  
x. 12: Gal. vi. 7. See note on Luke viii.  
15.

**an hundred, sixty, thirty**, the  
different degrees of faithfulness and devotedness of life with which fruit is brought  
forth by different classes of persons. There  
is no point of comparison with the different  
classes in the parable of the *talents*: for  
he who had five talents yielded the *same*  
increase as he who had two.

**24–30.**] SECOND PARABLE. THE  
TARES OF THE FIELD. *Peculiar to Matthew*. For the explanation of this parable  
see below, vv. 36—43.

**24.**] **is likened  
unto a man**, i.e. ‘*is like the whole circumstances about to be detailed; like the case  
of a man*,’ &c. A similar form of construction is found in ch. xviii. 23, and in  
other parables in Matthew.

**25.**]  
**men**; i.e. not, ‘*the men*’ belonging to the  
owner of the field, but **men** generally: and  
the expression is used only to designate  
‘*in the night time,*’ not to charge the servants with any want of watchfulness.

**sowed**] more than this: the verb means,  
**sowed over the first seed**.

**tares**]  
The Greek word is *zizania*: apparently  
the *darnel*, or *bastard wheat* (lolium album), so often seen in our fields and by  
our hedgerows; if so, what follows will be  
explained, that the **tares** appeared when  
the wheat came into ear, having been  
previously not noticeable. It appears to  
be an Eastern word.

Our Lord was  
speaking of an act of malice practised in  
the East:—persons of revengeful disposition watch the ground of a neighbour being  
ploughed, and in the night following sow  
destructive weeds. (The practice is not  
unknown even in England at present.  
Since the publication of the first edition  
of my Greek Test., a field belonging to  
myself, at Gaddesby in Leicestershire,  
was maliciously sown with charlock [sinapis arvensis] over the wheat. An action