parable has an historical importance, having  
been much in the mouths and writings  
of the Donatists, who, maintaining that  
the Church is a perfectly holy congregation, denied the applicability of this this Scripture to convict them of error, seeing that  
it is spoken not of the Church, but of the  
world: missing the deeper truth which  
would have led them to see that, after all,  
the world *is the Church*, only overrun by  
these very tares.

**the good seed,** **(these) are the sons** strikingly sets sets forth  
again the identity of the seed, in its  
growth, with those who are the *plants*:  
see above on ver. 19.

**the sons of  
the kingdom**] not in the same sense as  
in ch. viii. 12,—SONS *there*, by covenant  
and external privilege: *here*,—by the effectual grace of adoption: the KINGDOM,  
*there*, in mere paradigm, on this imperfect  
earth: *here*, in its true accomplishment,  
in the new heavens and earth wherein  
dwelleth righteousness: but in their state  
among the tares, waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God.

**41.  
things that offend**] generally understood  
of those men who give cause of offence,  
tempters and hinderers of others: it is  
better to understand it rather of *things*,  
as well as men, who are afterwards designated.

**43.**] **shall shine**, literally,  
**shine out** (their light here being enfeebled  
and obscured), as the sun from a cloud.

**of their Father**, answering to *the sons*, ver. 38. This sublime announcement is over and above the interpretation of the parable.

**44.**] FIFTH PARABLE. THE HIDDEN  
TREASURE. *Peculiar to Matthew*. This  
and the following parable are closely connected, and refer to two distinct classes  
of persons who become possessed of the  
treasure of the Gospel. Notice that these,  
as also the seventh and last, are spoken  
*not to the multitude, but to the disciples*.

In this parable, a man, labouring  
perchance for another, or by accident in  
passing, finds a treasure which has been  
hidden in a field; from joy at having found  
it he goes, and selling all he has, buys the  
field, thus (by the Jewish law) becoming  
the possessor also of the treasure. Such  
hiding of treasure is common even now,  
and was much more common in the East  
(see Jer. xli. 8: Job iii. 21: Prov. ii. 4).

This sets before us the case of a  
man who unexpectedly, without earnest  
seeking, finds, in some part of the outward  
Church, the treasure of true faith and  
hope and communion with God; and  
having found this, for joy of it he becomes  
possessor, not of the treasure without the  
field (for that the case supposes impossible), but of the field at all hazards, to  
secure the treasure which is in it: i.e. he  
possesses himself of the means of grace  
provided in that branch of the Church,  
where, to use a common expression, he  
has “gotten his good:” he makes that