, but sought the Shepherd, and  
fetched back with joy.

**8–10.**]  
THE LOST PIECE OF MONEY. In the following   
wonderful parable, we have the  
next class of sinners set before us, sought  
for and found by the power and work of  
the Spirit in the Church of Christ. It  
will be seen, as we proceed, how perfectly  
this interpretation comes out, not as a  
fancy, but as the *very kernel and sense* of  
the parable. The **woman** cannot be *the  
Church absolutely*, for the Church herself  
is a lost sheep at first, sought and found by  
the Shepherd. Rather is the **house** here  
the Church—as will come out by and by,  
—and the **woman** the *indwelling Spirit*,  
working in it. All men belong to this  
Creator-Spirit ; all have been *stamped with  
the image of God.* But the sinner lies in  
the dust of sin and death and corruption—  
“*wholly unconscious.*” Then the Spirit,  
lighting the candle of the Lord (Prov. xx.  
27: Zeph. i. 12), searching every corner  
and sweeping every unseen place, *finds out*  
the sinner; restores him to his true value  
as made for God's glory. This lighting  
and sweeping are to be understood of the  
office of the Spirit in the Church, in its  
various ways of seeking the sinner—by  
the preaching of repentance, by the Word  
of God read, &c. Then comes the x  
again.

**9.**] **her** (female) **friends  
her neighbours** are invited—but there is  
*no return home* now—nor in the explanation,   
ver. 10, is there any “*in heaven,*”  
because the Spirit *abides in the Church*  
because the *angels are present in the*  
*Church,* see 1 Cor. xi. 10:—nor is it  
“*shall be*” (as in ver. 7 at the return of  
the Redeemer then future), but is—the  
ministering spirits rejoice over every soul  
that is brought out of the dust of death  
into God’s treasure-house by the searching  
of the blessed Spirit.

In this parable  
then we have set before us the sinner who  
is unconscious of *himself* and *his own real*  
*worth*; who is lying, though in reality a  
precious coin, in the mire of this world,  
and valueless, till he is searched out by  
the blessed and gracious Spirit. And that  
such a search will be made, we are here  
assured.

**11-32.**] THE PRODIGAL  
SON. Peculiar to Luke. ‘If we might  
venture here to make comparisons, as we do  
among the sayings of *men*, this parable of  
the Lord would rightly be called, *the crown  
and pearl of all His parables.*’ Stier.

We have here the and welcome reception   
of the returning sinner (sinner under  
the most aggravating circumstances) in the  
bosom of his heavenly Father: and agreeably   
to the circumstances under which  
the discourse was spoken, the **just men**  
who murmured at publicans and sinners   
are represented under the figure of  
the elder son:—see below. The parable  
certainly was spoken on the same occasion  
as the preceding, and relates to the  
same subject. Those who for the sake  
of upholding the patristic interpretation  
deny this, seem to me to have entirely  
missed the of the parable: see  
below.

**11.**] **a certain man**—*Our  
heavenly Father,* the Creator and Possessor   
of all: *not Christ,* who ever represents   
Himself *as a son*, although frequently   
as a possessor or lord.

**two sons**, *not*, in any *direct* or primary sense  
of the Parable, *the Jews and the Gentiles:*  
that there may be an ulterior application  
to this effect, is only owing to the parable  
grasping the *great central truths*, of which  
the Jew and Gentile were, in their relation,  
illustrations,—and of which such illustrations   
are furnished wherever such differences occur.

The two parties standing in the   
*foreground* of the parabolic mirror are,  
*the Scribes and Pharisees* as  
the elder son, the *publicans and sinners* as  
the younger ;—all, *Jews:* all, belonging to  
God’s family. The mystery of admission   
of Gentiles into God’s Church