

Matthew 13.44 (NRSV)

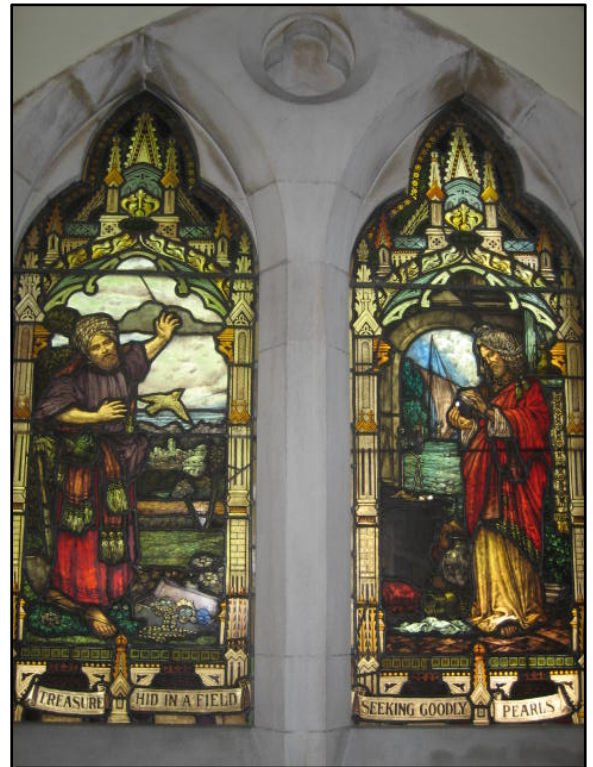
‘The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field, which someone found and hid; then in his joy he goes and sells all that he has and buys that field.

Gospel of Thomas (Saying 109):

Jesus said, "The (Father's) kingdom is like a person who had a treasure hidden in his field but did not know it. And [when] he died he left it to his [son]. The son [did] not know about it either. He took over the field and sold it. The buyer went plowing, [discovered] the treasure, and began to lend money at interest to whomever he wished."

— *Gospel of Thomas 109, Patterson/Meyer translation*

Qn) What are the differences, what are the similarities, what does that say?



Depiction of the Treasure in the field and the Pearl of great price. Photograph of stained glass window at Scots' Church, Melbourne.

Ruth 4:1-13

No sooner had Boaz gone up to the gate and sat down there than the next-of-kin,^[a] of whom Boaz had spoken, came passing by. So Boaz said, "Come over, friend; sit down here." And he went over and sat down. He then said to the next-of-kin,^[b] "Naomi, who has come back from the country of Moab, is selling the parcel of land that belonged to our kinsman Elimelech. ⁴ So I thought I would tell you of it, and say: Buy it in the presence of those sitting here, and in the presence of the elders of my people. If you will redeem it, redeem it; but if you will not, tell me, so that I may know; for there is no one prior to you to redeem it, and I come after you." So he said, "I will redeem it." ⁵ Then Boaz said, "The day you acquire the field from the hand of Naomi, you are also acquiring Ruth^[c] the Moabite, the widow of the dead man, to maintain the dead man's name on his inheritance." ⁶ At this, the next-of-kin^[d] said, "I cannot redeem it for myself without damaging my own inheritance. Take my right of redemption yourself, for I cannot redeem it."

Then Boaz said to the elders and all the people, "Today you are witnesses that I have acquired from the hand of Naomi all that belonged to Elimelech and all that belonged to Chilion and Mahlon. ¹⁰ I have also acquired Ruth the Moabite, the wife of Mahlon, to be my wife, to maintain the dead man's name on his inheritance, in order that the name of the dead may not be cut off from his kindred and from the gate of his native place; today you are witnesses."

¹³ So Boaz took Ruth and she became his wife. When they came together, the LORD made her conceive, and she bore a son.

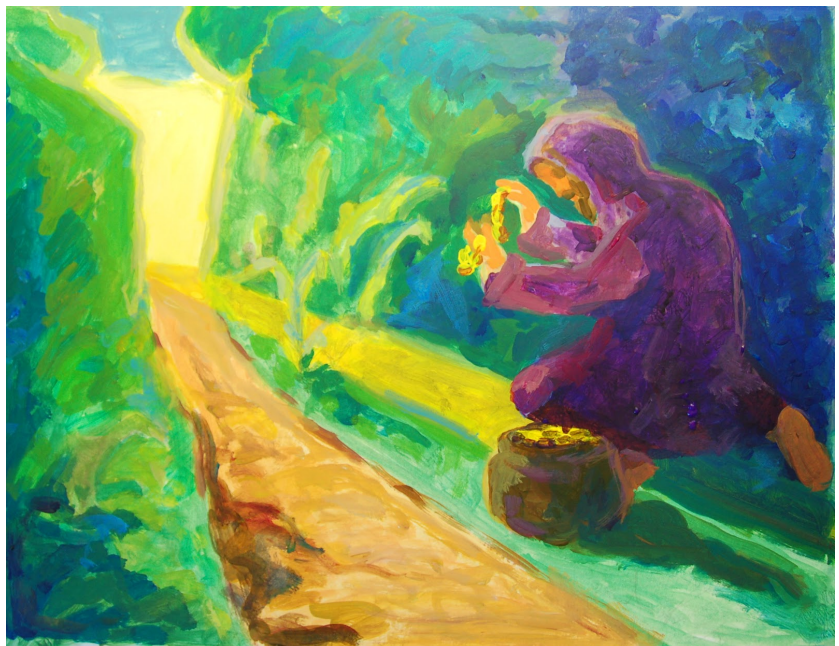
Irenaeus Against Heresies

Book 4: Chapter XXVI.—The treasure hid in the Scriptures is Christ; the true exposition of the Scriptures is to be found in the Church alone.

1. If any one, therefore, reads the Scriptures with attention, he will find in them an account of Christ, and a foreshadowing of the new calling (*vocationis*). For Christ is the treasure which was hid in the field, that is, in this world (for “the field is the world”); but the treasure hid in the Scriptures is Christ, since He was pointed out by means of types and parables.

Origen's Commentary on the Gospel of Matthew. Book 10 The Field and the Treasure Interpreted.

And here we must inquire separately as to the field, and separately as to the treasure hidden in it, and in what way the man who has found this hidden treasure goes away with joy and sells all that he has in order to buy that field; and we must also inquire—what are the things which he sells. The field, indeed, seems to me according to these things to be the Scripture, which was planted with what is manifest in the words of the history, and the law, and the prophets, and the rest of the thoughts; for great and varied is the planting of the words in the whole Scripture; but the treasure hidden in the field is



the thoughts concealed and lying under that which is manifest, “of wisdom hidden in a mystery,” “even Christ, in whom are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hidden.” But another might say that the field is that which is verily full, which the Lord blessed, the Christ of God; but the treasure hidden in it is the things said to have been “hidden in Christ” by Paul, who says about Christ, “in whom are the treasures of wisdom and knowledge hidden.” The heavenly things, therefore, even the kingdom of heaven, as in a figure it is written in the Scriptures—which are the kingdom of heaven, or Christ—Himself the king of the ages, are the kingdom of heaven which is likened to a treasure hidden in the field.

René Girard's Deceit, Desire and the Novel

A man sets out to discover a treasure he believes is hidden under a stone; he turns over stone after stone but finds nothing. He grows tired of such futile undertaking but the treasure is too precious for him to give up. So he begins to look for a stone which is too heavy to lift—he places all his hopes in that stone and he will waste all his remaining strength on it.