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BRIEF COMMUNICATIONS

Note on Matthew 13 20 and Matt. 6 30 — Luke 12 28.

Seeing recently a large stack of reeds tied in bundles about six inches in diameter for use as fuel, as is the common practice in North China, such a bundle having a regular market price, I was reminded of the words in the parable of the tares, (Matt. 13 30): "I will say to the reapers, Gather up first the tares, and bind them in bundles to burn them." That the idea was to use them for fuel, and not simply to burn them up in the wasteful American way is confirmed by the passage (Matt. 6 30 — Luke 12 28) referring to "the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven." As the Palestinian oven was heated by a fire inside it (*Encyclopedia Biblica*, column 605), this "grass" (including in Chinese as in Greek all kinds of herbage, even wild flowers) was apparently as in North China commonly used by the poor for fuel in the preparation of food.

If, as seems probable, conditions in Palestine were somewhat similar to those in China now, these latter passages may be joined with the parable of the woman seeking the lost coin (Lk. 15 *et.*), the passages giving the price of sparrows (Matt. 10 29, Lk. 12 8), and others, as indicating Jesus' familiarity with the daily life of the poor.

T'unghsien near Peking

DEAN R. WICKES