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Studies in Texts.

SUGGESTIONS FOR SERMONS FROM CURRENT LITERATURE.

BY THE REV. HARRINGTON C. LEES, M.A.

TEXT: "*I am the Door.*"—St. John x. 9.

[Suggestive book: "The Magi: How they recognized Christ's Star," by Colonel Mackinlay (=My.). Other books quoted: "The Holy City," Fulleylove and Kelman (=K.); "Hastings' Dictionary" (=H.); "Hastings' Dictionary of Christ and Gospels" (=C.G.); Dods' "St. John" in "Expositor's Greek Testament" (=E.); Westcott's "St. John" in "Speaker's Commentary" (=W.); Moule's "Romans" in "Expositor's Bible" (=M.).]

WORDS of the text spoken between Feasts of Tabernacles and Dedication (John vii. 2, x. 22), a season when the sheep needed the fold every night (My., 55). No Bible animal is more spiritually illustrative than the sheep: "500 allusions" (H., iv. 487). The discourse of John x. is an extension of Christ's conversation with the blind man (E., i. 788), just abandoned by his own shepherds as a lost sheep (John ix. 34).

Three suggestive thoughts on "*The sheep and the fold*":

I. *Approach*: "by Me."—Here is the need of definite adherence. "When Jesus said 'I am the Door,' He clearly meant to exclude every other means of mediation" (C. G., i. 490). Here, too, is personal application. "To him that knocketh it shall be opened" (Luke xi. 10). Even the sheep must walk up to the door. Here is spiritual vitality. "Door of the *sheep*, not of fold; life, not organization" (W. on x. 7).

II. *Admission*: "enter in."—The thought is striking, when the context of excommunication is noted. "Putteth forth" (x. 4) is the same word as "cast out" (ix. 34, 35). The outcast is the incomer. There is a suggestion here of overruling Providence. The hirelings' act of "casting out" is, from the Divine standpoint, a "putting forth" by the Shepherd (*cf.* E., i. 789, W. on x. 4). Free entrance, however, has its costly price (John x. 11, and *cf.* the developed thought, Heb. x. 18-20).

III. *Assurance*: "shall be saved."—Not only free entrance, but full security. The door that opened in front is shut behind us. "Door includes the frame of wood or metal, as well as the doorway" (C. G., i. 491). "Not a hurdle, but a solid door capable of resisting attack" (E., i. 788). Christian flock, admitted by death of Shepherd, is also "kept safe in His life" (M., 138, on Rom. v. 10). "A shepherd near Hebron, when asked why the sheepfolds there had no doors, answered quite simply, 'I am the door.' He meant that at night he lay down in its open entrance to sleep, so that no sheep might stray from its shelter without wakening him, and no ravenous beast might enter but across his body" (K., 101). It is the Christ Who not only openeth and no man shutteth, but shutteth and no man openeth (Rev. iii. 7), Who is the protecting and living door.