

Ye Olde Plum News

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THE NEW TESTAMENT, ALLUSIONS

DEATH, WHERE IS THY STING

In 1 Cor. 15:55 (KJV) Paul wrote: "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?" Paul wanted to remind the Christians in Corinth of the resurrection, that death is not the end. Plum, as so often in his allusions, deliberately made a misinterpretation: He let his characters instead use it as an expression for utterly despair.

- Bertie Wooster was engaged to Honoria Glossop and had for weeks been suffering from her "moulding" of his soul. *Honoria had lugged me round to lunch at Aunt Agatha's and I had just been saying to myself. 'Death, where is thy jolly sting?'* (The Inimitable Jeeves, 1923).

- Hugo Carmody expressed his feelings with these words when he learnt that his beloved Millicent had become engaged to Ronnie Fish. (Summer Lightning, 1929).

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### GIVE AND OBEY ORDERS

"The centurion answered and said, Lord, I am not worthy that thou shouldest come under my roof: but speak the word only, and my servant shall be healed. For I am a man under authority, having soldiers under me: and I say to this man, Go, and he goeth; and to another, Come, and he cometh; and to my servant, Do this, and he doeth it." (Matthew 8:8-9, KJV) Some examples of Plum's allusions:

- Stanwood Cobbold had to obey his father's orders. *'It's like in the Bible,' said Stanwood, searching for an illustration and recalling Augustus Robb's observations on the subject, 'You remember? Where the bozo said 'Come' and they goeth.'* (Spring Fever, 1948)

- Bertie Wooster: *When at my private school I once won a prize for Scripture Knowledge, which naturally involved a lot of researching into the Holy Writ, and in the course of my researches I came upon the story of the military chap who used to say 'Come' and they cometh and 'Go' and they goeth. I have always thought that that was Florence in a nutshell. She would have given short shrift, as the expression is, to anyone who had gone when she said 'come' or the other way around.* (Much Obligated, Jeeves, 1971)

- *It would do Vanessa all the good in the world to find that she had come up against someone she*

*couldn't say 'Go' to and he goeth, as the fellow said.* (Aunts Aren't Gentlemen, 1974)

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LILIES AND KING SOLOMON

Jesus said: "Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin: And yet I say unto you, That even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these. Wherefore, if God so clothe the grass of the field, which to day is, and to morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?" (Matt 6:28-31, KJV) Plum often alluded to this passage:

- Spike had bought a *dude suit* in a second hand shop. *'Don't you like de duds, boss?'* inquired Spike anxiously. *'They're the last word,' said Jimmy. 'You'd make Solomon in all his glory look like a tramp cyclist.'* (A Gentleman of Leisure, 1910)

- Sir Raymond Bastable about his nephew: *A social blot who was so constantly having to have something done about him had, in his opinion, no right to be so beautifully dressed. Solomon in all his glory might have had a slight edge on Cosmo Wisdom, but it would have been a near thing.* (Cocktail Time, 1958)

- *'You want a job?'* said Mr Wheeler. *'I want a job,' said Archie... 'I always looked on you as one of our leading lilies of the field,' he said. 'Why this anxiety to toil and spin?'* (Indiscretions of Archie, 1921)

- Psmith had offered to become Lord Emsworth's secretary. *'But have you had any experience as a secretary?'* *'I must admit that I have not. You see, until recently I was more or less one of the idle rich. I toiled not, neither did I - except once, after a bump-supper at Cambridge - spin.'* (Leave it to Psmith, 1923)

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### THE PRODIGAL SON

Jesus illustrated God's forgiveness with the parable of the Prodigal Son who left his father and wasted his inheritance with riotous living. He was totally impoverished, herded swine but was not allowed to eat their food. "And he arose, and came to his father. But when he was yet a great

way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him. And the son said unto him, Father, I have sinned against heaven, and in thy sight, and am no more worthy to be called thy son. But the Father said to his servants, Bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand and shoes on his feet: and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it, and let us all eat, and be merry: For this my son was dead, and is alive again, he was lost, and is found." (Luke 15: 18-24, KJV) Plum of course added his own twists:

- *In spite of the fact that the return of the prodigals is almost proverbially associated with joyful feelings and effervescent gaiety on the part of the whole strength of the company with the possible exception of the fatted calf, Flick had found little to cheer her in the atmosphere of her revisited home.* (Bill the Conqueror, 1924)

- Percy Pilbeam had hidden the manuscript of Gally's Reminiscences in an empty shed at Blandings and now discovered that the Empress had been moved to this shed. He was devastated. *For Pilbeam was afraid of pigs. He seemed to remember having read somewhere that if you go into a pig's sty and the pig doesn't know you it comes for you like a tiger and chews you to ribbons. Greedy though he was for Lord Tilbury's gold, something told him that never, no matter how glittering the reward, would he be able to bring himself to go into that sty in quest of the manuscript, guarded as it now was by this ravening beast. The Prodigal Son might have mixed with these animals on a clubby basis, but Percy Pilbeam knew himself be incapable of imitating him.* (Heavy Weather, 1933)

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MIXED REFERENCE

"No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." (Luke 9:62, KJV)

Jesus said to Peter: "Put up thy sword into the sheath: the cup my Father hath given to me, shall I not drink it?" (John 18:11, KJV)

The swan was not one of those swans that abandon a battle half fought. When it set its hand to the plough, it did not readily sheath the sword. (Cocktail Time, 1958)

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