

their own flocks. Jesus uses the fold as illustrative of the Church of God, that sacred inclosure, in which his people find shelter and safety. **THE DOOR.** But one door usually entered the fold, as this simplified the matter of watchcare. This door would be guarded by a suitable assistant and **THE PORTER**, of ver. 3. By "*the door*," Jesus here refers to the legitimate, the divinely appointed way of entering the fold. There is such a way for the sheep, which he explains subsequently in vers. 7, 9. There is also a legitimate way for those who claim to rule or lead the sheep, and of this he speaks in vers. 1, 2. The legitimacy of entrance into positions of authority in the Church he would have applied to the conflicting claims of the Pharisees and himself. If either he or they did not enter by the door, "*the same is a thief and a robber.*"

**HE THAT ENTERETH IN BY THE DOOR IS THE SHEPHERD**, etc., ver. 2. He fears no test, whether by facing the porter or by calling the sheep. He comes with undeniable rights. So Jesus faced all the predictions of Scripture, and other tests appointed long before.

... "Christ answers all that is written of the Messiah. Consequently he who watches over the sheep, Jehovah, ... gives him access to the sheep, in spite of the Pharisees and priests, and so many others."—*Darby*.

... "Although Son, he had submitted to each ordinance which God had laid down for the shepherd of his earthly people."—*Kelly*.

... All who pretend to minister to the flock of Christ must do it in his own way. Heb. 5, 4; 1 Tim. 3, 1-7.

**THE PORTER OPENETH**, ver. 3. Free access to the fold is given him by each custodian of that fold, whether, **AS IN JESUS' CASE**, it be prophecy, personal purity, wonderful works, or evident indorsement of God; or whether, **AS IN OTHER CASES**, ministers, etc., it be the Spirit's call, providential direction, etc. For God's true workmen every door swings open wide. See 1 Cor. 16, 9; 2 Cor. 2, 12; Col. 4, 3; Rev. 3, 8.

**THE SHEEP HEAR HIS VOICE**; ver. 3. Each Eastern shepherd has his own call, to which his sheep respond. For many sheep he has special names, or calls, to which they respond individually. A strange call frightens them, and if repeated scatters them. **AND LEADETH THEM OUT.** Always so in the East, the shepherd's dog follows behind; and if a restive sheep, or a strange one, lingers un-

wisely, he is prompt in his attention, in order that the whole flock may follow after the shepherd. Psa. 23, 2, 3; Rev. 7, 17.

... How beautifully this *leading out* was realized in Christ's first followers. He entered by the door into the Jewish fold; he lifted up his voice: many diverting voices were lifted up also; but the sheep heard him, and he led them out of the restrictions of Judaism into the freedom of Christianity.

**2. THE EXPLANATION**, v. 7-11. "*Then said Jesus,*" v. 7. This shows why he spoke the words which follow. The people did not understand the parable, and therefore he proceeds to help them, not opening every point already suggested, but rather such as to the misunderstanding crowd would prove most useful. The Pharisees probably caught his rebuke as spoken already, and that sufficed. He opens this portion also with the assuring **VERILY, VERILY**.

**I AM THE DOOR OF THE SHEEP**, v. 7. He now passes over the shepherds, whether true or false, and addresses himself to the concerns of the sheep. Of these he is "*the door*." By him, and by him alone, they enter in from the wilderness to the fold, as is described in v. 9. Jesus is presented as a way of access to the fold in John 14, 6; Eph. 2, 18.

... Those who are shepherds, or pastors, in Christ's flock first enter the flock through this door and so become his sheep. Through Christ's call and authority they subsequently enter the pastor's position. Under Christ, they are both sheep and shepherds, and here the analogy of the parable obviously fails.

**THIEVES AND ROBBERS**, v. 8. Here, and again in v. 10, Jesus pauses a moment to contrast with himself the religious teachers before whom the people were bowing. The purposes and character of all these leaders are clearly set forth in these verses.

**BY ME**, v. 9, and there is no other door, though some may illegitimately gain a standing in the fold; "*By me—IF*," here is the condition; "*By me, if—ANY MAN*," no matter what his nationality, etc.; "*By me if any man—ENTER IN*," become a true and accepted dweller within the fold of God, "**HE SHALL BE SAVED . . GO IN AND OUT . . FIND PASTURE**." That is, he shall enjoy safety, freedom, and comfort.

**I AM COME**, v. 10, "*that they might have life*," imparted, preserved, enjoyed, glorified; and, "*that they might have it more abundantly*;"