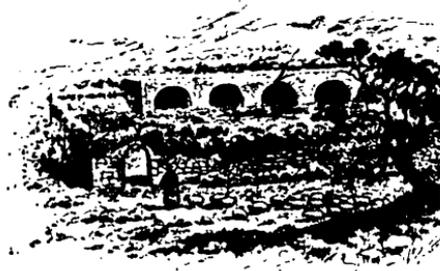


sheep in the morning. "Climbeth up some other way." The walls were high and often covered on the top with brambles so as to make it more difficult to scale them; but "thieves" and "robbers" could find their way over.

V. 3. "To him the porter openeth." acknowledging by opening the door the rightful claim of the true shepherd "that entereth in by the door" (v. 2). "The sheep hear his voice." The relations between the shepherd and the sheep are, in the East, of the most intimate sort. It is no fiction that they recognize his voice. The incident is authentic of the stranger who changed clothes with the Jerusalem shepherd and tried to lead the sheep, but the sheep followed the shepherd's voice, not the clothes upon the stranger's back. "Calleth his own sheep by name." It is thus that the flocks are separated in the morning, each shepherd calling over rapidly the roll of his own flock; and each sheep answering to its own name and going at the shepherd's call.



Eastern Sheepfold

V. 4, 5. "When he hath put forth all his own (R.V.). How exquisitely the care and tenderness of the shepherd are depicted! Not one in his flock is forgotten, the poorest, the weakest, the silliest, all cared for. And how vivid also the picture, "He goeth before them and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice." The thought is of a compact, well-cared-for, and docile flock, keeping close to their shepherd because they have learned to know and love him, and "fleeing from" the "stranger" who may have the hardihood to attempt to seduce them from the guidance of their rightful leader.

II. The Interpretation, 6-11.

V. 6. "They understood not." They ought to have understood; for the language and even the thought was from their own Scripture (see Ezek.

34); but it needed eyes less blinded than theirs by pride and unspirituality to discern what the great Teacher meant.

V. 7. "Jesus therefore said unto them again." (Rev. Ver.) Oh, the patience of the Saviour! He will have all men to come to the knowledge of the truth. He carefully unfolds to them the hidden meaning, and with startling boldness as to His own claim. "I am the door." A sample of the surprises with which the teaching of our Lord abounds. When we expect Him to say, "I am the Good Shepherd," He says, "I am the door of the sheep." He is not only the One who enters the door and leads His people in and out, but the very door of entrance itself to the Kingdom of God.

V. 8. "All that ever came before me" All false guides who claim authority over God's heritage, such as the Pharisees, are "thieves and robbers." They have no right to lead God's people. Their aim is to fleece the flock, not feed it. "The sheep did not hear them." The true sheep, that is, those "ordained to eternal life," God's own.

V. 9 "I am the Door." An emphatic repetition of a great pivotal truth, recalling such sayings as those of John 14: 6; 11: 25, 26. A three-fold blessing is his who enters in by Christ as the Door, deliverance from peril,— "Shall be saved" (see Rom. 8: 1); freedom,— "shall go in and out" (see John 8: 36); sustenance,— "find pasture" (see Phil. 1: 19). The phraseology of this verse comes from Numbers 27: 15-21, where Joshua is appointed by Jehovah as the leader of the hosts of Israel in succession to Moses.

V. 10. "I am come that they might have life . . . abundantly." By whatever figure Jesus sets Himself forth as the Saviour, the idea of giving is not far away. And all of His gifts and blessings as are "unmarily comprehended," as the Shorter Catechism would say, in these words—"I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly."

V. 11. "I am the good Shepherd." The word translated "good" cannot be adequately translated. It means: "beautiful, noble, brave" [Scotch "braw"] as opposed to "foul, mean, wicked." Christ is the perfect Shepherd, as opposed to his own imperfect ministers; He is the true Shepherd, as opposed to the false shep-