xvi. 6, 7.

**the sheep hear his voice]**The voice of *every such true shepherd* is  
heard (heeded, understood) by *the sheep*  
(generally): and he calls by name *his own*sheep,that portion of the great flock  
entrusted to him, and leads them out to  
pasture, as his office is.

This distinction between **the** *sheep*and **his own** *sheep*has given rise to mistakes, from not observing that *shepherd* here is still in its  
mere general sense, and not spiritually  
applied until ver. 7, or rather ver. 11 above.  
It has been imagined that *Christ* is here  
spoken of, and that therefore these two  
descriptions of sheep must be different, and  
so the whole exposition has been confused.  
Even Stier has fallen into this mistake.

**4.]** When he has led forth to pasture  
*all* his sheep (there shall not an hoof be  
left behind), he goes before them (see “The  
Land and the Book,” p. 202, where there  
is an interesting description of this following the shepherd); in his teaching pointing  
out the way to them; they follow him, because they know his voice; his words and  
teaching are familiar to them. But observe that the expression here becomes  
again more general; not **his own** sheep,  
but **the** sheep as in ver. 8. *The sheep*know the voice of every true shepherd.

**5.]** So that the **stranger** is not *the  
shepherd of another section* of the flock,  
but an *alien*: the *robber* of ver. 1. Meyer  
takes it as merely meaning a *stranger*, one  
who is *not their shepherd:* but this hardly  
seems strong enough for the context.

6.] The word here rendered in the A. V.  
“*parable*” is not exactly what is commonly  
socalled: not properly a parable: but rather  
a parabolic allegory. The *parable* requires  
  
  
*narrative* to *set it forth;* and St. John  
relates *no such.* The right word here  
would be **allegory**. The original term, in  
its etymology, signifies, any saying diverging from the common way of speech.  
We have other examples in ch. xv. 1 ff.  
and in Matt. ix. 37, 38.

**7.]** What  
follows is not so much an exposition, as an  
expansion of the allegory.

The key  
to this verse is the right understanding  
of what went before. Bear in mind, that  
verses 1—5 were spoken of *shepherds in  
general.* But these shepherds themselves  
go into and out of the fold *by the same  
door as the sheep:* and Christ *is that  
door;* THE DOOR OF THE SHEEP: the *one*  
door both for sheep and shepherds, into the  
fold, into God’s Church, to the Father.

**8.]** I believe that the right sense of  
these words, **All that ever came before me,**has not been apprehended by any of the  
Commentators.

First, they can only  
be honestly understood of *time*; all *who  
came* **before** *me* (not, ‘*without regard to  
me,*’ nor ‘*passing by me as the door,’* nor  
‘*instead of me:*’ nor ‘*pressing before me,’*(ch. v. 7,) which would have been “*come*,”  
not “*came:*? nor “before taking the  
trouble to find me, the door:” nor any  
other of the numerous shifts which have  
been adopted).

*What pretended teachers  
then came before Christ?* Remember the  
connexion of these discourses. He has  
taught the Jews that Abraham and the  
prophets *entered by Him* (ch. viii. 56): but  
He has set in strong opposition to Himself  
and His, them (these Jews) and their  
father, *the Devil* (ib. ver. 44). *He* was, as  
Milton has it, ‘the first thief who clomb  
into God’s fold ;’ and all his followers are