A CRITICAL NOTE ON JOHN 10:16: FOLD OR FLOCK?
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In the KJV of John 10:16 these words are found: "And other sheep I have which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd." A small but very important variation of this rendering occurs in the ASV: ". . . and they shall become *one flock,* one shepherd." The difficulty lies not so much in our choice between GENEESETAI (impersonal 3rd sg.) and GENEESONTAI (3rd plu.) as it does between a non-existent AULEE ("fold") and the undisputed POIMNEE ("flock") of the Greek text. Concurring with ASV's "flock" are such versions as RSV, The New English Bible, Moffatt's Translation, and the Berkeley Version. Concurring with KJ is the Douay-Rheims Version. What has caused this discrepancy, since AULEE ("fold") and POIMNEE ("flock") occur in this passage without any variations in the Greek text and are so distinguished in the Syriac and Egyptian versions?

The second "fold" has crept into our AV by way of Jerome's Latin Vulgate (completed A.D. 405), which renders both AULEE and POIMNEE by ovile ("fold") : "Et alias oves habeo, quae non sunt ex hoc ovili: et illas oportet me adducere, et vocem meam audient, et fiet unum ovile, et unus pastor."[1] Following these same words which also appear in his note on Ezek. 46:22, except that he substitutes "atrium" (a hall, or front room of a house) for *ovile* both times, Jerome adds: "Hoc enim Graecum AULEE significat, quod Latina simplicitasin ovile transtulit" ("Surely this Greek AULEE expresses what Latin simplicity has translated in ovile"). Westcott remarks here: "This observation is interesting for several reasons. It shows how perfunctory Jerome's criticism of the Latin text. He distinctly prefers *atrium* to *ovile* as the rendering of AULEE, and yet he did not introduce it into his revision. And again he implies that AULEE stands in the Greek text in both places, which at least shows that he did not verify his reference."[2] Mgr. R. A. Knox is somewhat more objective in his English translation of the Vulgate New Testament. Although he has retained "one fold" in the text, he does acknowledge in a footnote the more accurate Greek.[3]

The Old Latin texts (a, b, c, e), upon which Jerome based his N.T., read *ovile, grex* ("fold," "flock"). The observation of a Catholic scholar will bear weight here: "There is no doubt that POIMNEE (grex) 'flock' is the correct reading in 16b, though 'Fold' (ovile) appears in the Vg and thenceforth universally in Mediaeval Latin writers."[4] Augustine's commentary *in loco* reads *ovile, ovile* without comment, but elsewhere (e.g. Serm. cxxxviii 5) reads *ovile, grex.* Wycliffe, following the Vulgate, carried forward the "one fold" translation into his English Bible. Even Erasmus, in his Greek Testament (1516), left the rendering unchanged. This was introduced into Cromwell's Great Bible (1539) and retained its place in later versions down to the KJV of 1611. The phrase, "one fold, one shepherd," had evidently become sacred by use.

Need we insist on one or the other translation? The answer of *A Catholic Commentary* is negative: "There shall be one *flock* (not 'fold', which, however, is no real distortion of the sense)."[5] Per contra, there is a vast difference between the two. A Palestinian sheepfold was a walled enclosure in which several shepherds kept their flocks at night as protection against marauding wolves and thieves. Here was organization and limitation, the number of sheep to be accommodated being restricted by the area within the boundary. "This fold" refers to true believing Israelites whom God had elected and enclosed with rites and ceremonies, separating them from unbelievers, particularly unbelieving Gentiles. Now Christ speaks of "other sheep which are not of this fold" — believers among the Gentiles; them also He must bring, and they shall become one *flock.* How? Not by bringing them into the fold of Judaism,

not by making them Israelites, but rather by breaking down "the middle wall of partition," even the rites and ceremonies, "that He might create the two in Himself one new man thus making peace and that He might reconcile to God both in one body through the cross" (Eph. 2:14:16). A flock emphasizes life! a "new man"! "one body"! a growing and expanding organism that is vitally related to the Shepherd in its center, who is its Head (Ezek. 34:12, 23, 24, 31). A fold, on the other hand, emphasizes exclusiveness, enclosure, uniformity. The one stresses a common life, the other a common way. Furthermore, "there shall be one fold" would imply that at that time there was more than one fold and that they would be brought together. Never were the Gentiles spoken of as a "fold", but rather as scattered, "once not a people but now the people of God" (I Pet. 2:10). Although the flock appears to be divided into different folds, true believers in Christ, wherever found, are members one of another and of Christ who indivisibly binds them together by virtue of the life that He alone imparts. Herein lies true ecumenicity, not in uniformity nor in unity, but in organic union.

What is the significance of this for our attention? Coupled with the total impact of the Latin Bible on the language and thought of Western Christianity, the translation of *ovile* for *grex* ("fold" for "flock") has been disastrous in idea and influence. Whether by intent or ignorance, such a translation serves to confirm and extend the false claims of Rome and a false view of Christ's Church.

NOTES

1. *Biblia Sacra Latina ex Biblia Sacra Vulgatae Editionis* (London: Samuel Bagster and Sons Limited, n.d.).

2. Brooke Foss Westcott, *The Gospel According to St. John* (London: John Murray, 1908), II, "Additional Notes on Chap. X., 16, 22, 29," 74-75.

3. See F. F. Bruce, *The Books and the Parchments* (London: Pickering & Inglis Ltd., 1953), p. 199.

4. Don Bernard Orchard (General Editor), *A Catholic Commentary on Holy Scripture* (London: Thomas Nelson and Sons Ltd., 1953), p. 1000.

5. Ibid.

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