

THE WESTERN RITE AND THE EASTERN CHURCH

DR. J. J. OVERBECK AND HIS SCHEME FOR THE RE-ESTABLISHMENT
OF THE ORTHODOX CHURCH IN THE WEST

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INTRODUCTION

IN THE centuries following the separation of the Eastern and Western Churches, generally dated at 1054, Eastern Orthodox Churchmen were of the opinion that the true Catholic Church of Christ was represented only by the Eastern Church. And since there were no Western churches using “Western” rites left in communion with the Eastern Church it was natural for the idea to emerge that Orthodoxy was synonymous with the Eastern or Byzantine Rite. The thousand-year usage of Western rites and ceremonies, with the customs pertaining thereto, which existed alongside the Eastern rites when the two Churches were one was almost forgotten. At any rate, Western usages were considered in a suspicious light because they were practiced, from the Orthodox Catholic viewpoint, by schismatics and heretics who had deserted the communion of the Church Catholic.

In the middle of the nineteenth century a sensation was caused in the Orthodox Church circles by the conversion of Dr. Joseph J. Overbeck, a most remarkable but, today, comparatively unknown figure. Unlike previous converts to Orthodoxy, Overbeck did not wish to abandon his Western heritage and ethos and simply become an *Eastern* Orthodox Catholic. He desired to see the re-establishment of a Western Catholic Church in communion with the Church of the East. He wanted this projected Western Church to be at one with the Orthodox Church doctrinally but to re-possess its ancient heritage of Western rites and customs. Gathering about him a small group of other like-minded Orthodox converts in England, Overbeck devised a scheme to follow in order to bring his ideas into being.

Overbeck sometimes referred to his projected Church as the Western “Uniate” Church, *i.e.*, a Church in union with the Eastern Church. He used the word “Uniate: in a sort of reverse order from the way it had originally been utilized, *i.e.*, as a designation for those former members of the Eastern Orthodox Church who had united with Rome, retaining the Eastern rites and disciplines but adopting Roman Catholic doctrine. By “Uniate” Overbeck meant Western Catholic Christians who preserved the Western rites but adopted the Eastern discipline (Church constitution, canon laws, etc.) as well as the Orthodox creed. This “Uniate” Western Church was to be called the Western Orthodox Catholic Church.

Overbeck and his ideas were a bit premature and probably too radical for some Eastern Churchmen to accept in the nineteenth century. He was not successful in his attempts to restore the Western Church in communion with Orthodoxy. It was only in the 1920’s (in Poland) and 1930’s (in France) that Western Orthodox parishes were established along lines similar to those Overbeck proposed.

The purpose of this study will be to examine Dr. Overbeck’s scheme and describe his efforts to implement it. An attempt will be made to uncover the reasons for Overbeck’s failure. Heretofore the subject has not received any extensive treatment. The present study, thus, is the first analysis of source materials concerned with Overbeck and his scheme. As such, obviously it will have its shortcomings. The study is based primarily on Overbeck’s own writings as found, for the most part, in *The Orthodox Catholic Review*, the journal he founded and edited. Some use also was made of materials in Russian ecclesiastical journals and other Russian sources found in the libraries of Columbia and Harvard University as well as at the New York Public Library.

OVERBECK'S BACKGROUND AND CONVERSION TO ORTHODOXY

LITTLE is known of Dr. Overbeck's background and early life. It has been possible, however, to ascertain certain details of his earlier years by means of incidental information gleaned from his writings. A German by nationality, Dr. Joseph J. Overbeck (1821-1905) received an education preparing him for a career in the Church. He held a doctorate in philosophy as well as in theology. Ordained a Roman Catholic priest, he was not an Ultramontane but considered himself a member of the liberal school of thought. For a time he was pastor of a church in Westphalia, a province of Prussia. He was also Privat-dozent in the Theological Faculty at the University of Bonn. Here, from 1854 to 1857, he "interpreted" the writings of the Eastern Fathers, Ss. Basil the Great and John Chrysostom. In 1852 he visited Rome for the first time but was not particularly impressed by what he saw. At Bonn he was associated with many of the future leaders of the Old Catholic movement.

Becoming disenchanted with Roman Catholicism, Dr. Overbeck left the Roman Communion, became a Lutheran and married. It is not certain whether or not he functioned as a Lutheran pastor but he once assisted at a High Lutheran Mass in the Berlin Dorotheenstädtische church. In the early 1860's Overbeck emigrated to England where he made his home until his death more than a half-century later. Between 1863 and 1877 Dr. Overbeck was professor in German at the Staff College of the Royal Military Academy in Woolwich. His daily contacts with members of the Church of England led him to a study of Anglican theology but he never became an Anglican.¹ Becoming dissatisfied with Protestantism, Overbeck began to study Orthodoxy:

When I was still living in Oxford, about seven years ago, a closer study of the history of the Eastern Church established in me the conviction that the Orthodox Church was the only one that could claim to be the ancient Catholic and Apostolic Church of our Creed, and that all the other Churches of Christendom were schismatically and heretically cut off from the Catholic and Orthodox Church.²

In another place Overbeck said that he and a few friends gathered in an English country place to discuss the problems of Church unity and there it was decided that Orthodoxy was the Church established by Christ. It was here that Overbeck's scheme for the restoration of Western Orthodoxy was born.³ Even before his formal reception into the Orthodox Church, Overbeck published his first book dealing with Orthodoxy and the Western Confessions.⁴ This work, which examined Papalism and Protestantism from the Orthodox viewpoint, was immediately translated into Russian. It made a sensation in Russia and appeared in several periodicals in serial form and was published in book form as well, under the title *Light from the East*.

After the publication of his book, Overbeck approached Archpriest Eugene Ivanovich Popoff (1813-75), the Chaplain of the Russian Imperial Embassy in London. Popoff, an important figure in the Orthodox Church in Western Europe, had received his *Magister Theologiae* from the St. Petersburg Spiritual Academy in 1835. He had been Chaplain to the Russian Embassy at Copenhagen and at the beginning of 1842 was appointed to the Embassy church at London. Here he spent thirty-three years until his death. Popoff was

¹ J.A. Douglas in a footnote in Chrysostom Papadopoulos, *The Validity of Anglican Ordinations* (London, [1931]), p. 32n, states that Overbeck "accessed to the Church of England." This is asserted by other Anglicans as well; Cf. J.O. Johnston, *Life and Letters of Henry Parry Liddon* (London, 1904), p. 190. Overbeck, however, made it quite clear that he was never a member of the Establishment.

² *The Orthodox Catholic Review*, III, No. 1-6 (January-June, 1871), 45. Hereafter this will be cited as OCR. Since the complete file of this journal is used as a source, titles of articles will not, with some exceptions, be cited.

³ OCR, VII (Part I, 1878), 29.

⁴ *Die orthodoxe katholische Anschauung*, etc. (Halle a/S., 1865).

the Holy Synod's chief supplier of information concerning religious activities in England. Through Fr. Popoff many converts found their way into the Orthodox Church. At one time he refused the Bishopric of San Francisco.

Dr. Overbeck revealed to Popoff his intention of petitioning the Holy Governing Synod at St. Petersburg to receive him into the Orthodox Church and allow him to work for the establishment of an Orthodox Catholic Western Church. He also intended to ask for permission to exercise his sacred orders even though he had married after ordination. Fr. Popoff informed Count Dmitry Andreevich Tolstoy (1823-89), Chief Procurator of the Holy Synod from 1865 to April 1880, of Overbeck's plans and asked instructions of the Synod. At the same time he forwarded the first chapters of Overbeck's recently published book in Russian translation.⁵

Tolstoy thought it premature to burden the Synod with Popoff's inquiry and sought instead the counsel of Metropolitan Philaret (Drozdov) of Moscow in a letter dated 17 July 1865. He wanted such directions from Philaret as "would in no wise violate the sacred bases of our Church nor, at the same time, repulse from us this outstanding foreign theologian, openly acknowledging the truth of our confession of faith, but held back by the delusion implanted within him concerning the exterior manifestation of it by the rites." Until hearing from Philaret, Tolstoy advised Popoff to refrain from taking any official steps in the matter.

Philaret answered Tolstoy, on 24 July 1865, that Overbeck's request to be received into communion without being bound to conform to Eastern customs was stated in such an indefinite manner that it gave no basis on which to give a definite reply. It would not be especially dangerous, however, to answer in the affirmative. As for allowing Overbeck to exercise his orders, this was another matter. This could not be permitted on the basis of the twenty-sixth Apostolic canon and the sixth canon of the Sixth Ecumenical Council which forbade clerics to marry after ordination. These canons were more especially applicable to Overbeck's case since he had received his orders in the Roman Church where permanent celibacy was a condition of ordination. Generally speaking, the violation of the condition impaired the rights acquired under the condition. Furthermore, by showing leniency to one individual, the Orthodox people as well as other Orthodox Churches could be scandalized. Philaret did not take Overbeck's writings into account in his consideration of the matter since he had not seen them.

Naturally (wrote Philaret) it would be comforting to receive a theologian into communion with the Orthodox Church who, by the power of dispassionate research and resolution, wrested himself of the artificially woven meshes; and it shall be sad if he, having approached her very doors, shall not enter in.

Philaret was pleased to hear that there were those in the West who desired to know Orthodoxy, who respected it and wanted to be in communion with it. Nevertheless he concluded his message to Tolstoy by stating that Fr. Popoff ought to forewarn Overbeck that his petition to the Synod could have no promise of success under the conditions he proposed. At the same time, however, Philaret added that Fr. Popoff ought to explain the reasons to Overbeck as he (Philaret) outlined them.⁶

Shortly after this the historian, Andrew Nicholaevich Murav'ev (1806-74), a friend of Metropolitan Philaret and for a time an official in the office of the Chief-Procurator, read Overbeck's book, *Light from the East*, and was prompted to correspond with him. In one of his letters to Murav'ev, Overbeck put the question: "Can the Eastern Church permit the marriage of a Latin priest after his conversion to Orthodoxy, since the rule allows such a marriage only before ordination?" Murav'ev forwarded this question to Metropolitan

⁵ *Sobranie mnenii i otzyvov Filareta, mitropolita moskovskago i kolomenskago, po uchebnym i tserkovno-gosudarstvennym voprosam*, ed. Archbishop Savva, Tome V, Part II (Moscow, 1888), 711-713.

⁶ *Ibid.*

Philaret. The latter answered with a long opinion which Murav'ev passed on to Overbeck through Fr. Popoff. Later Murav'ev learned that Overbeck was especially concerned with the problem since he himself had desired to be received into the Orthodox Church as a priest.⁷

In this his second judgment on the same matter the usually over-cautious Philaret seemed prepared to allow Roman Catholic priests to be received after marriage provided that they were never elevated to any higher degree of priesthood. But the question, he said, had to be decided by the Russian Church in council and agreed to by the other Eastern Churches. Moreover, extreme care had to be exercised. It was not desirable to disturb the harmony of the entire Church by relaxing the rules for a few persons.⁸ Philaret apparently had in mind the possible conversion of numbers of Roman priests. At any rate, by this time the question was merely an academic one since Overbeck had already been received into the Church.

There probably were few ecclesiastical decisions of any moment made without Philaret's knowledge and advice during his tenure as Metropolitan of Moscow. His opinions on various questions have been collected and issued in many volumes. Probably the Orthodox churchman of the largest stature in the nineteenth century, Metropolitan Philaret Drozdov (1782-1867) was the occupant of the cathedra of Moscow from 1821 until his death. He was metropolitan from 1826. Though he was some of the greatest theologian of the Russian Church in modern times, he was a kind of unofficial Patriarch of the Russian Church in the last century.

In the summer or autumn of 1865 Overbeck and his family were received into the Orthodox Church by Archpriest E. I. Popoff in London. Although received as a mere layman, Overbeck was far from discouraged. He considered himself not an ordinary convert but one with the calling to restore to communion with the Eastern Church the ancient Church of the West which had been in schism and heresy over 800 years. Fr. Popoff "gladly acceded" and "heartily co-operated" with Overbeck's scheme. Previous to this Popoff had not been overly enthusiastic about the possibilities of Anglican Book of Common Prayer rites in the Orthodox Church,⁹ but now he had an active interest in Overbeck's endeavors and apparently helped promote the scheme. Many years later, in an obituary notice of Overbeck by "N.O." (Olga Novikoff?), the electrifying effect of his first books describing the great role predestined by Divine Providence for Orthodoxy to play in the West is mentioned.¹⁰ Popoff, too, may have been affected by Overbeck's writings. As far as Anglicanism was concerned, however, Fr. Popoff had studied it carefully and saw no possibility of any intercommunion with it. In his opinion the Church of England, in the circumstances in which it found itself, was powerless as a whole entity, as a Church, not only to accomplish but even to begin the work of correcting itself of its errors.¹¹

From his study of ecclesiastical history Overbeck was convinced that, from the origin of Christianity, the Catholic Church had consisted of a Western and Eastern Church united by one faith and one "Church Constitution" until the schism of 1054, when the Western Church separated from the true Catholic Church as a result of heretical innovations. Since 1054 Catholic truth was to be found only in the Eastern Church. The only means for regenerating the ante-schismatic Catholic Church of the West lay in the remnant of ancient Catholicity, the Eastern Church. The Orthodox Catholic Western Church had to be resuscitated, but it was "suicidal" to think that the West could be Orientalized, *i.e.*, that Western people could become Eastern in

⁷ *Pisma mitropolita moskovskago Filareta k A.N.M...1832-1867* (Kiev, 1869), p. 641.

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 644. This opinion was dated 3 July 1866.

⁹ "Letters of Archpriest E. I. Popoff on Religious Movements in England," *Khristianskoe Chtenie*, LXXXIV, Tome CCXVII, Part II (May 1904), 744-47.

¹⁰ N.O., "Korrespondentsia iz Londona (= Protoierej Stefan Gaferli i Iosif Overbek)," *Tserkovnyj Vestnik*, XXXI, No. 50 (15 December 1905, col. 1585).

¹¹ "Materials on the Question of the Anglican Church (From the Notes and Letters of Archpriests J. V. Vasil'ev and E. Popoff)," *Khristianskoe Chtenie*, LXXVII, Tome CCIV, Part I (July, 1897), 56.

their customs, traditions, and rites, in the process of returning to the ancient Catholic faith and doctrine. The Church of Ss. Cyprian, Ambrose, Augustine, Jerome, Leo, Gregory the Great, and others, which was conceived by God's providence, must be restored. In order to revive the Western Church it was necessary to have recourse to one of the autocephalous Eastern Churches in order (1) to be admitted into the Catholic Church; (2) to be reconciled and absolved of the sin of schism, and (3) to obtain help in the labor of restoration.

Dr. Overbeck felt that the Eastern Church could not demand uniformity of custom, could not oblige Western people to adopt the Eastern rite together with Orthodoxy. The Eastern rite was designated by Divine Providence for the Eastern mind, which by nature differed from the Western mind. The Eastern rites could be studied by Western people and even acclaimed by them as masterpieces, but they still would remain foreign. Such forms of prayer and such ritual and ceremony could never have originated with Western people. What was congenial about the Eastern mode of worship was its spirit and the Orthodox truth emanating therefrom, but its exterior manifestation, "the turgid expressions, the endless repetitions are foreign to us and leave us cold." And Eastern people, he thought, had similar feelings in regard to Western rites. The Liturgy as celebrated by St. Leo and St. Gregory the Great could claim exactly the same rights as that of St. Basil and St. Chrysostom.¹²

The restoration of the Western Church, in Overbeck's mind, would benefit the Eastern Church as well, for a "new current of life will flow to her heart." Eastern and Western minds would meet on common Orthodox grounds instead of on heretical soil. There would be no more one-sidedness. New paths would be found to an invigorated spiritual life. A copious exchange of talents and ideas would cause a stirring up of life such as it was in the Patristic age. The wall separating East and West would crumble and the two drawn into close relationships.¹³

¹² OCR, III, No. 1-6 (January-June, 1871), 45-6; V, No. 4 (October-December, 1876), 279.

¹³ OCR, V, No. 4 (October-December, 1876), 288.

OVERBECK AND HIS ATTITUDE TOWARD ROME

OVERBECK saw no possibility at all of unity with the Roman Church with its heretical dogmas of Papal supremacy and infallibility. The only way to reunion of East and West was by circumventing the Vatican through the founding of a Western Uniate Church in communion with the Eastern Church.

The Roman Catholics are schismatics, cut off from the living and mystical body of the Orthodox Catholic Church. They stand without the communion of Saints. Their sacraments, though *valid*, are *illegitimately and illicitly* administered, so that both the minister and the receiver are sinning by administering or receiving a sacrament. The offering of the Eucharistic Sacrifice by schismatic hand is a grievous crime, like the crucifixion of Christ by the Jews. The Pope, his bishops, priests, and deacons, have no rights, no jurisdiction whatsoever.¹⁴

Large numbers of the Roman Catholics, however, were blameless because of their personal ignorance of the facts of schism and heresy. And there were many Roman Catholics who desired to be real Catholics so that it was a “holy duty incumbent on the Orthodox Church to gather the true Western Orthodox Catholic Church from among the Romans.”¹⁵ The Roman Catholics must, he said, secede individually to Orthodoxy. Eventually Overbeck foresaw a Western Church composed of national Churches like the autocephalous Churches of the East: an Anglican Orthodox Church, as well as Italian, Gallican, Germanic, and Bohemian Churches. Each nation would possess its own Orthodox Catholic Church with its own national customs and usages but adhering to a common doctrine and the same canon law. All this could come to pass from the humblest beginnings.

A small mustard-seed must be planted in the West; the edifice of the Western Orthodox Church must begin with a few stones. And one may be certain that the Vatican shall become desolate and exist only as an eloquent monument of man’s presumption.¹⁶

Overbeck set out a program of twenty-three points which Roman Catholics would have to accept when they became Orthodox: (1) the denial of Papal novelties; (2) the denial of the doctrine of indulgences; (3) the rejection of enforced celibacy; (4) an intermediate state after death to be recognized but Purgatory rejected; (5) icons to be used in place of statues; (6) Baptism by triple immersion; (7) Chrismation by a priest to follow Baptism; (8) laity to communicate under both kinds; (9) the Sacrament to be celebrated with leavened bread; (10) only the Benedictine monastic order to be recognized since it existed previous to the schism; (11) no Roman Catholic saints canonized after 1054 to be recognized; (12) independent National Churches in communion with the universal Patriarchs to have the full right of existence; (13) Divine service to be in the vernacular; (14) an Epiclesis is to be added to the Roman Mass from the Mosarabic ritual; (15) the Roman doctrine of the *Filioque* is to be rejected; (16) infants and children to be communicated; (17) the Sacrament of Unction was not to be kept until death; (18) it would be best to reserve the matter of Confession to married clergy; (19) the Immaculate Conception could not be accepted as dogma; (20) “We reject all use of force and therefore corporeal punishment in matters or exercises which are purely spiritual”; (21) “We recognize the Orthodox Catholic Church as the sole and exclusive institution founded by Christ Himself from the salvation of the world”; (22) mixed marriages disapproved of and children of such marriages to be reared Orthodox; (23) “Our Church must abstain strictly from any interference in politics and must submit herself to any government instituted of God, remembering Christ’s words: ‘My kingdom is not of this world.’”¹⁷

¹⁴ OCR, I, No. 10-12 (October-December, 1867), 233.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, I, No. 2-5 (February-May, 1867), 104.

¹⁶ *Trudy Kievskoj Akademii*, 1869 (February), p. 295.

¹⁷ From the Russian translation (by E. I. Popoff) of *Die Rechtgläubige Katholische Kirche in Khristianskoe Chtenie*, 1868, II, 821-23. As concerns the

Among other changes which would be required of Roman Catholics when they became Orthodox Catholics would be to make the Sign of the Cross as in the Eastern Church. The latter way, he said, was the ancient way and it had been changed by Rome. Overbeck pointed out that Pope Innocent III, writing 1198, spoke of the present Orthodox manner of making the Sign of the Cross as the correct way.¹⁸

reference in point ten above, Overbeck elsewhere spoke highly of the Benedictine Order for it encouraged the progress of learning and civilization in a spirit of true evangelical freedom (*Svet s Vostoka* [Vilno, 1868], p. 163). On the other hand he often spoke most disparagingly of the Jesuits.

¹⁸ OCR, IX (Part I, 1880), 42; IX (Part II, 1881), 189. For other changes Cf. Appendix A.

OVERBECK AND HIS VIEW OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND

OVERBECK saw no possibility of unity with the Church of England. Such a union was impossible because the Orthodox Church required, as *conditio sine qua non*, entire agreement with the Orthodox faith from any body seeking unity with her. The Established Church not only did not profess the Orthodox faith, it authoritatively tolerated “all shades of belief from a mitigated Unitarianism to a slightly disguised Roman Catholicism.” Such a medley of creeds within the English Church generated indifference in doctrinal matters even among those of the greatest Catholics zeal. In Overbeck’s opinion the English Church was ruled by a Protestant subjectivism which affected even the Anglo-Catholics. In endeavoring to nourish themselves with better doctrinal food than their Bishops could give them, the latter tried to reconstruct Catholic antiquity privately without the guidance of authority and their efforts were simply the work of subjectivism.

Dr. Overbeck felt, however, that there was a class of Anglican High Churchmen, the younger Anglo-Catholics or Ritualists, whose zeal for unity, if directed properly, could result in unity with the Orthodox Church. This group must, however, (1) formally separate and cease communion with heretics; (2) entirely abandon any idea of union with Rome since it had lost its claim to Catholicity; (3) accept fully and without reservation all the dogmas and canons of the Orthodox Church; and (4) apply to the Orthodox Church in order to be reconciled and received into the Church. If the Catholic-minded High Churchman followed these steps, the Orthodox Church would give them Bishops to form a Holy Synod of the Orthodox Anglican Church in communion with the Ecumenical Patriarchs and the whole Church. The new Orthodox Catholics would retain a Western Liturgy (“not that of the Prayer Book, but the revised Roman or Sarum Mass”), and “Canonical hours, rites, ceremonies, vestments.” The Orthodox Anglicans should expect to be deprived of their livings and have their churches confiscated by the Establishment. They would have to depend on their parishioners for their livings. The Dissenters did it; Overbeck was confident that the Anglo-Catholics who were not in the Establishment because of the “loaves and fishes” could do as well.¹⁹

Unlike the Roman Church, Overbeck said that Orthodoxy did not ask for a secession from the English Church “but only for a return to the old English ante-schismatic Church – to the Church of St. Alban, the Venerable Bede, St. Edmund...” That the contemporary Church of England was not identical with or a lawful continuation of the Old Church could be seen from the fact that Baptismal Regeneration could be denied and denounced, the “Real Absence” taught in regard to the Eucharist, and Holy Orders considered not as a Sacrament conferring supernatural grace but, as Dr. Frederick Temple (1821-1902), the Bishop of Exeter put it, “simply a human matter of expedience.”²⁰ Overbeck believed that the “Church of England had made herself essentially Protestant at the Reformation, that she could not ‘unprotestantise’ herself. Moreover, there was no synodal authority which could speak for her in regard to Reunion, her Episcopate being only on paper and her real authority being the Privy Council and the Court of Arches.”²¹

Overbeck ridiculed the Anglican Branch Theory of the Church and had little enthusiasm for “Anglican Intercommunionists.” He was not even certain if the Establishment could even be called a Church. He often stated that he would much rather have dealt with Roman Catholics or Dissenters “than with variformed Anglicans playing in all colours of the rainbow.” With Roman Catholics one dealt with fixed tenets and knew where one stood, whereas with Anglicans “many a doctrine is simply a *fata morgana*, a delusive mirage, which vanishes as soon as you catch at it.” He found, however, that there were among the Anglicans those

¹⁹ OCR, III, No. 1-6 (January-June, 1871), 8-14.

²⁰ Quoted by J.J. Overbeck, *The True Old English Church* (London, [1880]), p. 3.

²¹ Papadopoulos, *The Validity of Anglican Ordinations*, p. 33n.

who agreed with his views simply because the “elasticity and indefiniteness of their faith” was abhorrent to them and they aspired after a firm dogmatic basis.²² There was a real body of friends of the Orthodox Church among the Anglicans but these were not to be found in the Eastern Church Association or among holders of the Branch Theory. However, these “Philorthodox” were the only individuals and Overbeck did not expect any large gains from the High Church.

Despite his aversion for the Established Church, Overbeck wanted to do it a service in his own way. He said that an Orthodox Western Catholic Church ought to be welcomed by the Establishment because it would remove some of the hypocrisy hovering over it. Those who were merely nominal members of the Establishment would quit it for the Orthodox Church. Moreover, a Western Catholic Church would prevent the continual strengthening of the Roman Church in England by ex-Anglicans. Would it not be better if those who were leaving the Establishment in “crowds” for “Popery and Jesuitism” entered the Orthodox Church with her entirely different attitude towards the state? Nine out of ten converts to Rome would prefer the Roman Church without the Pope and Ultramontanism, yet they would rather accept Rome and all its trappings rather than become members of an Eastern Church.²³

²² OCR, V, No. 4 (October-December, 1876), 279.

²³ *Ibid.*, 286.

OVERBECK'S PETITION TO THE RUSSIAN SYNOD

AFTER his reception into the Orthodox Church, Overbeck immediately set to work convincing his friends of the feasibility of his scheme for the restoration of the Western Orthodox Church. Soon there were those who shared his views. Douglas, the translator and editor of Papadopoulos' book on Anglican Orders, who generally was critical of Overbeck's work, admitted "that they and the few members of their group who are still with us are to be recognized as of the highest character and of considerable ability."²⁴ To give his ideas a wider range Overbeck began to publish *The Orthodox Catholic Review* in 1867. Since Overbeck had in mind not simply to get Westerners to join the Eastern Church but to revive the entire Western Catholic Church, he felt it necessary to make a formal appeal to some part of the Orthodox Church. He decided to deal with the Russian Church because she was more familiar with Western Christendom. Russian contained millions of Roman Catholic and Protestant subjects and the Russian Church was more aware of the state of religious affairs of such Western-oriented people. The churchmen of Greece and Constantinople, on the other hand, he felt had more than once compromised themselves and their Churches in dealings with the English Church. Russians would not be so apt to be led astray. Moreover, Russia was a connecting link between East and West. The Russian Church was not only more cautious but she also was "active and stirring" while her sister Churches were engaged in other, internal, matters.

Overbeck was somewhat uneasy about the political tensions of the time. Since mid-century the British had developed a vigorous Russophobia. This may have stemmed from the Russian suppression of the Hungarian Revolt of 1848 and the Crimean War. Overbeck feared the labeling of his work a "Russian Propaganda" by some "enraged Anglican Intercommunionist." A writer in the *Union Review*, in March 1867, did insinuate that Overbeck had political aims. Overbeck carefully avoided the political arena and it was only after the Russo-Turkish War (1877-78) that any mention of the political situation entered his magazine. During that war he abstained from discussing the Eastern Question or the war itself except that he hoped the peace negotiations following the war would improve the Ecumenical Patriarch's degraded position within the Ottoman Empire. His sympathies in the Eastern Question were, however, obviously with the Russians.²⁵ He was a friend of Madame Olga Novikoff, the interpreter of Russian policies to the British, and, starting in 1878, his journal carried reviews of several of her books which attempted to explain Russia and her interests in the legacy of the "Sick Man of Europe."

Overbeck pointed out to those who might be worried, that his petition to the Russian Holy Synod (drawn up in March, 1867) had no allusion to politics and he stressed that signers would certainly not be examined on their political creed. He was, nevertheless, apprehensive that the political situation had affected his petition numerically. He was quick to point out that whenever the restored Western Church was in possession of a hierarchy of three bishops, she would be entitled to attain full national independence. She then would stand in the same relationship to the Russian Church as any other autocephalous Church. Of course the Russian Church would never be forgotten for her services, but this spirit of gratitude had no bearing on politics.²⁶

The petition to the Russian Synod was circulated not only in English but also in German, French, and Latin, and was printed in Greek and Russian as well. Overbeck hoped for a "respectable number" of Western Christians to sign the petition. This was for two reasons: (1) the group would represent a strong nucleus of

²⁴ Papadopoulos, *The Validity of Anglican Ordinations*, p. 35n.

²⁵ OCR, VI (January-September, 1877), 144.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, III, No. 1-6 (January-June, 1871), 47-48.

the new Western Church, a nucleus capable of attracting more Anglicans, Romans, and Dissenters once the movement was afoot; (2) a larger group could not be so easily ignored by the Orthodox Church, forcing her to deal with the petitioners.²⁷

Not unconnected with Overbeck's scheme was the appearance in the *Church News* of 10 April 1867, the organ of advanced High Churchmen, of proposals by someone signing himself "Orthodoxus," advocating the founding of a Uniate autocephalous English Church in communion with the Orthodox Church. This Church would use the ancient (pre-Reformation) Anglican ritual, the validity or lawfulness of which the Orthodox Church did not question. These proposals did not originate with Overbeck who wrote in a later issue of the same paper that his petition with a similar intent had been circulating some three or four weeks. "Orthodoxus" carried on a dispute, in which Overbeck also joined, with E.S. Ff(oulkes) in the columns of the same paper.²⁸ Ffoulkes was a convert to the Roman Church from Anglicanism to which he eventually returned.

Overbeck's petition also appeared in an anonymous pamphlet issued by "a clergyman lately seceded from the Anglican Church" who had joined Overbeck's movement. The author appealed to his former brethren to quit the Establishment and sign the petition to the Russian Church. He declared the Church of England heretical, a "state-ridden and Protestantised Church," "depraved in Faith and in Worship by a heretical State." After enumerating the Establishment's defects, he said that the only thing to do with the Church of England was to leave it and join the Orthodox Church.²⁹

By September 1869, after securing 122 signatures to the petition, Overbeck decided to present it to the Holy Governing Synod at St. Petersburg. Despite the languages in which it had appeared, the petition circulated primarily in Great Britain. Besides Anglicans, some Roman Catholics had signed it. Upon reception of the petition, the Metropolitan of St. Petersburg, Isidore Nikol'skij (1799-1802), immediately formed a commission to study the question. The Synodal Commission was presided over by the Metropolitan himself. Overbeck was appointed a member by personal letter of the Metropolitan. Among the other members were Archpriest Eugene I. Popoff, Professor J. T. Osinin, and Archpriest Joseph Vasil'evich Vasil'ev. Fr. Vasil'ev was a graduate of the St. Petersburg Spiritual Academy where his Magister's dissertation had been "On the Primacy of the Pope." Because of his knowledge of Roman Catholic doctrine he had been sent to Paris as rector of the Russian church there. In 1867, with the creation of an Educational Committee at the Holy Synod, he was appointed first chair.

At Christmas of 1869, Overbeck and Popoff were summoned to the Russian capital to participate in the consultations of the Synodal Commission. The result of the meetings was such that the petition received the entire approval of the Holy Synod, which "expressed its willingness to further our plan by all the weight of its authority." Overbeck was given a warm welcome by the hierarchs of the Synod and they assured him of their avid interest in the success of his scheme.

After the Synod approved the principle of Western Orthodoxy it set to work on details. Overbeck was requested to present his revision of the Roman Mass for its approbation. About nine months later Overbeck forwarded his revision of the Mass to the Holy Synod and at Christmas of 1870 he was called again to

²⁷ *The True Old English Church*, pp. 10-11. See Appendix B for the text of the Petition.

²⁸ OCR, I, No. 2-5 (February-May, 1867), 54-7.

²⁹ *The Present Crisis: An Appeal to Ritualists and all those who are sincerely searching for the truth, the way, and the life* (London, 1869), pp. 10. The authorship of this pamphlet is wrongly ascribed to Overbeck by the Dictionary of Anonymous and Pseudonymous English Literature (London, 1928), IV, p. 416. It probably was written by A.V. Richardson who also was "Orthodoxus," about which see below, pp. 66-69. The text of this pamphlet first appeared as an article in the OCR, II, No. 1-12 (January-December, 1868), 149-157.

St. Petersburg to discuss the liturgical draft in committee. After several sittings the Commission fixed the final text of the Mass and it was approved subsequently by the Synod. The Latin text was to be considered the authentic basis for all translations. The Latin text of the “Liturgia Missae Orthodoxo-Catholicae Occidentalis,” was published in the *Orthodox Catholic Review* together with an English translation.³⁰ In order to facilitate approval of his plan Overbeck had not waited to present the Holy Synod with a draft of extended portions of the Western ritual and offices. He was of the opinion that no time ought to be lost setting the movement afoot. It would take too long to settle all the details. “For the beginning we need only one thing, viz., the recognition of the Western liturgy.” He proposed that the Western Church use the Western Mass and temporarily follow the Eastern forms for the administration of the Sacraments and lesser offices, until the Western forms were revised.

As for the Western Mass, Overbeck had studied the *Missale Romanum* and produced from it a Mass which he felt answered Orthodoxy’s desiderata without being arbitrary. He proposed to adhere closely to the *Ordo Missae* except for the following main divergences:

(1) The kneeling down, worshipping, and elevation of the elements after the words of institution have been recited, is to be abolished. The Eastern Church generally believes that the consecration and transubstantiation of the elements only takes place at the Invocation (epiclesis) of the Holy Ghost. The before-mentioned Elevation was introduced after the great schism, about the twelfth century, to fix and symbolize the Roman opinion. (2) The form of the Invocation of the Holy Ghost, “*Supra quae propitio*,” etc., being rather mutilated in the Roman canon, we substitute the unexceptionally full form of the Mozarabic Missal (Dom. V. in Quadrag.). (3) We advise the use of leavened bread, for a *practical* reason. As the Orthodox Western Church advocates the Communion under both kinds, and the preservation of the consecrated wine for a length of time is difficult, the Eastern use of saturating the consecrated bread with the consecrated wine and then drying it, is highly expedient and commendable. Wafer-bread is hardly fit for this process... (4) The addition of Filioque is to be removed from the Creed.³¹

This was written before the Western Mass was actually approved. In the final redaction the prayer “*Supra quae propitio*” was left in while the Epiclesis was interpolated into the prayer following: “*Supplices te rogamus*.” Previous to this, in his *Die orthodoxe katholische Anschauung* (Halle, 1865), Overbeck had felt that the medieval Roman Catholic theory of the consecration taking place at the Words of Institution was valid, though he said that there were signs of a former Invocation in the Roman Mass, while such traces were quite clear in the Mozarabic Mass.³² Overbeck’s view on azyme bread (wafer bread), went through a period of change. In 1865, in the same place of the work just cited, he felt that the Western use of azymes had just as long an Apostolic tradition as the East had for leavened bread. In 1867, however, he recommended leavened bread for practical reasons but said that there could be no real objection to “wafer-bread,” since it was used in the West before the Schism. He did not mention that the use of azymes was a bone of contention between the Churches at the time of the Schism. Later, however, Overbeck came to feel that leavened bread ought to be used as a matter of principle.³³

Although the Russian Holy Synod seemed wholeheartedly to have approved Overbeck’s scheme, it was for some reason hesitant to give the “go ahead” signal on its own authority. This is all the more strange

³⁰ III, No. 1-6 (January-June, 1871), 49-72. This also appeared in a separate edition.

³¹ OCR, I, No. 6-9 (June-September, 1867), 196. Punctuation, capitalization, etc., are Overbeck’s.

³² The Russian edition *Svet s Vostoka* (Vilno, 1868), p. 155.

³³ OCR, IX (Part II, 1881), 190.

when it is considered that the years (1869-70), when the Synod was discussing Overbeck's plan, were of tremendous moment in the history of Western Christianity. These were the years of the preparation for and the convening of the Vatican Council which declared Papal Infallibility, as well as the years in which the Old Catholic revolt against Rome began. One would have expected the Russian Synod immediately to have set Overbeck's plan into motion and to have made every effort to capitalize on the West's unrest. Some writers are of the opinion that the Synod postponed any action while awaiting to see what direction the Old Catholic movement would take.³⁴ Also the Russian Synod apparently was reluctant to proceed on its own in such an undertaking as the restoration of Western Orthodoxy without the approval and concurrence of the Eastern Patriarchs. Overbeck explained the hesitance by asserting that "the Russian Church alone had no power to decide finally in a matter affecting the whole Orthodox Church. Thus the matter was transferred to Constantinople."³⁵ Perhaps Overbeck's scheme was conceived on too grandiose a scale. He continually emphasized that he was not interested in acquiring a few converts for the Orthodox Church but in restoring a whole Church. If he had spoken of establishing Western Rite parishes within the jurisdiction of the Russian Church the Synod would perhaps not have been so hesitant and not have disturbed the Greeks with the question. The matter would have then been of concern only to the Russian Church and would not have required the approval of other autocephalous Churches. At any rate the Russian Synod submitted the approved Mass to the Ecumenical Patriarch at Constantinople "for final sanction" and the steps necessary to get the approval of the other Orthodox Churches were undertaken.³⁶

³⁴ Georges Florovsky, "Orthodox Ecumenism in the Nineteenth Century," *St. Vladimir's Seminary Quarterly*, IV, No. 3-4 (Spring-Summer, 1956), 32.

³⁵ *The True Old English Church*, p. 13.

³⁶ OCR, V, No. 4 (October-December, 1876), 282.

OVERBECK AND THE OLD CATHOLIC MOVEMENT

THE Old Catholic movement, beginning after the Vatican Council of 1870, arose from the refusal to accept the new dogma of the Infallibility and universal ordinary jurisdiction of the Pope of Rome as defined by that Council. The movement was confined chiefly to the Germanic countries. In a short time the Old Catholics joined with the Church of Utrecht (Holland) which had seceded from Rome in 1724.³⁷ This revolt against Rome stirred the imaginations of many Orthodox churchmen who saw in it the way for the reunion of at least part of the Western Church with the East.

Overbeck, too, was taken by the vision of the great things promised by the Old Catholic revolt. He followed the movement with paramount interest. He knew most of the Old Catholic leaders personally from his school and university days and some of them, like Dr. J.F. Ritter von Schulte, were former colleagues of his at the University of Bonn. He considered them as men of high character and scholarship, unlike the usual Roman “mercenaries” who “march with that *cadaverous* obedience enacted in the rules of Loyola’s order.”

When the first Old Catholic congress was announced for September 1871, Overbeck sensed its importance in the matter of Christian unity and he discussed it with his Orthodox Russian friends. They, too, saw the importance of the congress and hoped that Orthodox-Old Catholic unity would be considered there. Overbeck communicated with J.J.I. von Döllinger (1799-1890), one of the chief leaders in the movement, who answered that the question of unity would certainly be treated and invited Overbeck and his friends to attend. He hoped, at the same time, that “Russia would take steps, or give utterances expressing the wish and hope of a Union.”³⁸

The Russian Church had high hopes for the outcome of relations with the Old Catholics. Professor John Terent’evich Osinin (1835-1887) was sent to Munich as a representative and observer. Osinin, a member of the Synodal Commission established after Overbeck’s petition was received at St. Petersburg, was particularly equipped to deal with Western Churchmen. Born in Copenhagen of a Danish mother (his father has been attached to the Russian church there as a Reader), he had studied in Germany and had finished the St. Petersburg Spiritual Academy where his Magister’s dissertation was on “The new Roman Dogma of the Conception of the All-holy Virgin Mary.” He held the cathedra of comparative theology at the Academy and an instructorship in German which he spoke fluently. He was married to the daughter of Fr. E. I. Popoff.

When Overbeck arrived in Munich for the congress he visited the various Old Catholic leaders to feel out their attitude towards unity with the Orthodox Church. He found that Döllinger’s prejudices against the Russian Church had abated somewhat since the publication of his book *Kirche und Kirchen*.³⁹ Overbeck discussed with Döllinger the prevalent fear that Old Catholicism might degenerate into another Protestant sect but was assured that any tendency towards Protestantism would speedily be checked. Overbeck’s meeting with two professors of the University of Munich, Dr. Johannes Huber and Dr. Johann Friedrich, convinced him that both these men favored unity with the Eastern Church.

At the congress itself, presided over by Schulte while Döllinger preferred to remain in the background, Dr. Huber, in Overbeck’s view, prefaced the discussion about unity with the Orthodox Church rather unsatisfactorily. In view of this, Professor Friedrich Michelis of Braunsburg, an acquaintance of Overbeck for over twenty years, spoke very warmly on behalf of unity. In his speech Dr. Michelis mentioned the Syn-

³⁷ For full particulars on the Old Catholic movement see: C.B. Moss, *The Old Catholic Movement: Its Origins and History* (London, 1948).

³⁸ Dr. J.J. Overbeck, “The Old-Catholic Movement and the Munich Congress,” OCR, III, No. 1-6 (January-June, 1871), 119-122.

³⁹ Overbeck had examined and refuted Döllinger’s charges against the Russian Church in his *Die orthodoxe katholische Anschauung*, pp. 89-95.

odal Commission's activity in the work of restoration of the Western Orthodox Church and its revision of the Roman Mass.⁴⁰

At the time of the Munich Congress the Old Catholics were in an anomalous position. They still adhered to the Tridentine faith and wished to remain in communion with the Ultramontanes who, on the other hand, had expelled them from the Roman Church and considered them as Neo-Protestants. Overbeck could not perceive how the Old Catholics could unite with the Orthodox Church and still have communion with the heretical Roman Church. At this stage Döllinger still resisted any changes which would lead to the formation of a separate ecclesiastical body. Overbeck, on the other hand, hoped that the Old Catholics would soon organize their own Church and declare Rome heretical, since it was impossible to hope for the Vatican to turn the pages of its history backwards. The Old Catholics should not fear that they might sink to the level of a small sect for if they united with the Eastern Church they would acquire many millions of co-religionists. By such a union the Old Catholics would gain power to resist Rome and even to cause it to retreat. One of the paragraphs of the Munich Program stated that the congress looked forward to unity with the Greek and Russian Church since the reasons causing the separation of East and West were "insufficient" and there were no irreconcilable differences between the two. At the conclusion of the Munich Congress Overbeck had hopes that something would be accomplished.⁴¹

Dr. Overbeck's article in the *Orthodox Catholic Review* on the Munich Congress, which has been cited here, was commented on in the Old Catholic newspaper *Rheinischer Merkur* (later changed to *Deutscher Merkur*) by one of its correspondents who disapproved of its tenor. The statements in Overbeck's article to which the writer objected most were those stating that the Old Catholics had to adopt the whole of the Orthodox faith before there could be any unity, for only Orthodoxy had preserved the purity of the Apostolic tradition. The writer said that in such categorical statements there was left no room for exchange of ideas or mutual agreement. Doctrinally the West would be converted to the East. The correspondent felt that what was needed was the dispassionate discussion of the differences in doctrine in order to arrive at a mutual understanding. Otherwise, another Florentine Union would result.

Overbeck answered this in a letter to the *Rheinischer Merkur* in which he said the Eastern Church regarded the Old Catholics with hope and trust, and desired speedy and complete communion with them in order to re-establish Catholic unity between the East and West and thus battle the Ultramontane Roman Catholics with a common force. The Orthodox Church did not require blind submission from the Old Catholics but rather wanted a mutual agreement, though not an elastic one. Orthodoxy had preserved the true faith and if it could be shown that she was not the true bearer of the Apostolic tradition she would stand corrected. He called upon the newspaper to become the organ wherein questions separating the two Churches could be aired. He hoped that at least one step could be taken in the proper direction before the Cologne Congress was convened.⁴²

By the time the second Old Catholic Congress was held at Cologne in September 1872, Old Catholicism had developed somewhat and exhibited new features. It had advanced to the stage of an independent Church organization and new parishes were being formed. In June of the following year Joseph Hubert Reinkens (1821-96) was elected the first Old Catholic bishop. He was consecrated at Rotterdam, Holland by the Dutch Bishop of Deventer, Hermann Heykamp, on 11 August 1873.

⁴⁰ OCR, III, No. 1-6 (January-June, 1871), 122-125.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 127-29. After the congress Overbeck published his *Die Wiedervereinigung der Morgen und Abendlandischen Kirche* (Halle, 1872) which was concerned with the possibilities opened by the congress.

⁴² *Rheinischer Merkur*, No. No. 24, 26, 1872. Quoted in *Khristianskoe Chtenie*, 1872, III, 172-77.

Dr. Overbeck had little to say about the Cologne Congress and only mentioned it in connection with a review of a book⁴³ by Abbé Eugène-Philibert Michaud (1839-1918) several years later. Overbeck said that he heard Dr. Michaud's address at the Cologne Congress and admired his efforts to bring about unity between the Old Catholics and the Orthodox Church.⁴⁴ Michaud, a Roman Catholic priest from Paris, had joined the Old Catholic movement. At Cologne he proposed that the congress proclaim its recognition of the Seven Ecumenical Councils and declare that the later Western Councils, including Trent, were not ecumenical. Such a move was not yet acceptable, however, and a committee was appointed to examine the question of the Western councils. Michaud had apparently taken a position quite near the Orthodox one and it was expected that he would join the Church. Overbeck spoke of him as "not yet a formal member of the Orthodox Church."⁴⁵ Michaud, however, remained an Old Catholic and was later appointed to the Old Catholic Theological Faculty of the University of Berne. Michaud met the Russian General Alexander Kireeff (1833-1910), an Orthodox layman greatly interested in questions of Church unity, at the Cologne Congress and these two carried on a correspondence for many years.⁴⁶

⁴³ *Discussion sur les Sept Conciles OEcumeniques, etudies au point de vue traditionnel et liberal* (Berne, 1878). Michaud dedicated this work to the "venerable Church of the East."

⁴⁴ OCR, VII (Part II, 1878), 151.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ J.H. Morgan, "Early Orthodox – Old Catholic Relations: General Kireeff and Professor Michaud," *The Church Quarterly Review*, CLII, (April-June, 1951), 1-10.

BONN REUNION CONFERENCES

IN SEPTEMBER of 1874 the first of two reunion conferences was held at Bonn, Germany. These were not ordinary gatherings of Old Catholics called to solve local and internal problems and to which a few guests were invited. The Bonn Conferences were called to promote unity among the Churches preserving the historic Christian faith and order. These conferences were sponsored by the Old Catholics and were under the presidency of Dr. Döllinger. It was the first time in the modern era that representatives of East and West gathered to study the differences keeping them apart. These conferences were intended to pave the way for unity between the Orthodox Church and the Old Catholics. They were not, however, official meetings of these Churches but the private discussions of theologians representing these Churches. Invitations were sent to the Anglicans, while other Protestants also were represented. The invitations sent out to theologians states, in part, the basis of the conferences as follows:

It is proposed to take, as the basis and standard of limitation of the endeavors of the conferences, the confessions, teaching, and institutions recognized as essential by both the Eastern and the Western communions before the Great Schism.⁴⁷

Among the Orthodox participants was Professor Zekos D. Rhosse, a theologian from Athens who knew of Overbeck's scheme. In his *book On the Unity of all Religions and Churches* (Athens, 1868) he spoke hopefully of the results of Overbeck's petition. Of the Russians, present was Archpriest John Leont'evich Janyshev (1826-1900), Rector of the St. Petersburg Spiritual Academy from 1866 to 1883 and professor of theology. Janyshev was later elevated to the dignity of Protopresbyter and was confessor to the Tsar. Alexander Kireeff represented the Society of Friends of Spiritual Enlightenment and Dr. Overbeck also was present.

As for the Anglican representation, Overbeck and the Orthodox generally, were disturbed that they were there at all and that so much time was spent discussing the problems between them and the Old Catholics. Moreover, it was felt by the Orthodox that a true representation of the Established Church was not present – only the minority which was sympathetic to Döllinger's scheme. Corporate reunion with the whole English Church was out of the question. It was only after the dis-establishment of the High Church portion capable of union that anything of the sort was possible. The remainder of the Establishment was heretical. "Is it not absurd to think a Church *unitable*, in which the ministers are permitted by authority to teach heresies?"⁴⁸ Overbeck thought it a "pity" that the Bonn Conference, "which seems to have been got up chiefly for the benefit of Anglicans," lost much time for nothing. If the same amount of time had been spent in discussions with the Orthodox that had been wasted on the Anglicans, the conference would have been more profitable. Döllinger had not adhered to his original program in which he had stated that the basis of discussions would be the faith of undivided Christendom (pre-1054). Overbeck doubted if even a single Anglican present accepted that basis: "The highest bidder among the Anglicans did not offer more than six Oecumenical Councils."

In Overbeck's opinion the question as to whether the Seven Ecumenical Councils were accepted by those present ought to have been proposed. Otherwise discussion was futile. Certainly the Anglicans would have been disappointed by such requirements but at least they would have then realised that their standard of faith was insufficient and that they were "unfit to be partners in a Catholic Union movement." Overbeck, as well as the other Orthodox, felt that the Old Catholics and Orthodox ought to have united first and when

⁴⁷ Moss, *The Old Catholic Movement*, p. 260.

⁴⁸ OCR, IV, No. 1 (January-March, 1875), 13.

this was accomplished to have addressed themselves to the “Anglicans and other Protestants” with proposals of unity. There was hardly anything separating the Old Catholics and the Orthodox. Aside from some minor problems, only the *Filioque* question required settling.⁴⁹ Kireeff, too, was of the opinion that Old Catholic associations with the Anglicans would only make Protestants of the Old Catholics.⁵⁰ And even among the Anglicans there were those who agreed with Overbeck. *The Church Review* (5 December 1874) published a letter from “Apuc,” i.e., a member of the Association for the Promotion of the Unity of Christendom, who agreed that the Establishment was not unitable. The writer expected that the Ritualists would soon be expelled from the Establishment unless they denied their faith in act (ritual) and in deed (doctrine). “Apuc” looked forward to this almost joyfully for then the High Church party would be free to unite with the Eastern Church.⁵¹

Overbeck had placed all his hopes on the Orthodox – Old Catholic meetings and he looked for a speedy agreement between the two. His transactions for the restoration of the Western Orthodox Church had bogged down in the Levant. In the meanwhile he felt that the Old Catholics were undertaking the same task. As long as the Old Catholics remained on the basis of the faith of undivided Christendom he felt duty-bound to co-operate with them. If, however, he found them deviating from this path, he would resume negotiations with the Church authorities in the East – negotiations which had not entirely ceased. If Döllinger continued to cling to his Anglican-inspired idea of corporate reunion the deathblow would be dealt to any possible union between the Old Catholics and the Orthodox. Unity between these two with the inclusion of the Anglicans was an impossibility. The work ought to have been confined to what was practicable and possible.⁵²

The second Reunion Conference was held at Bonn in August 1875. The first conference having aroused considerable interest, formal invitations to the second conference were dispensed with and all theologians interested in the conference were to be considered as invited. Quite a large number of Orthodox theologians attended, among them Archbishop Alexander Lycurgus, who died soon after (17 October 1875). Professor Osinin was there along with the Russians who had been present at the first conference, as was Dr. Overbeck. Other Orthodox notables present were Professor Nicholas M. Damala (1842-92) of the University of Athens, and Professor Nicholas Milash, later to become Bishop Nicodemus (1845-1915), the famous Serbian canonist. Overbeck corresponded with both these men. The Anglicans also came in greater force. At the conference the discussions, for the most part, centered about the *Filioque* question.⁵³

Döllinger again presided and guided the conference almost single-handedly. In evaluating both conferences, Overbeck felt that Döllinger had followed no plan in the selection of topics for discussion, and these seemed rather to have been chosen at random. Although Döllinger was a great historian he was not a dogmatic theologian. Overbeck, as well as the other Orthodox, wanted the central dogma of the Church settled first. It was no use, they thought, to agree to various propositions and individual dogmas while ignoring the basic dogma of the “Catholic Church and its authority.” The Old Catholics apparently had no clear-cut doctrine of the Church and did not even believe that the *One Church* existed in reality. Though Christ had founded one Church it had long ceased to exist exclusively in one body. Such ideas were somewhat akin to

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, 14-15.

⁵⁰ Morgan, “Early Orthodox – Old Catholic Relations,” p. 8.

⁵¹ “Apuc’s” letter was reproduced in the OCR, IV, No. 1 (January-March, 1875), 15.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 20.

⁵³ Discussed quite fully in Overbeck’s “The Bonn Conferences, and the Filioque Question,” OCR, IV, No. 4 (October-December, 1875), 217-64. This was reprinted separately.

the Anglican Branch Theory in that the Old Catholics held that the Churches in existence were only portions of what was once One and Universal.⁵⁴ Overbeck thought that Döllinger's Anglican-type conception of the Church may have obtained from the early anomalous position of the Old Catholics in relation to Rome: the Old Catholics had declared the Roman Church heretical and yet partook of its sacraments and wished to continue intercommunion with it. Such unnatural bonds, however, were soon sundered by Rome.

According to Overbeck, Döllinger was an advocate of corporate reunion with the Anglicans, which involved the supposition that the Established Church of England was a true branch of the Catholic Church. In reality, Anglicanism was a house of heresies and had forfeited its claims to Catholicity. The Orthodox Church, on the other hand, insisted as a fundamental principle that *all* her dogmas must be Catholic, pure and unaltered, with no taint of heresy. It was impossible to unite with any body that taught heresies. Since the Orthodox Church was the Church of Undivided Christendom, guided by the Holy Spirit, she could make no compromise in faith. In union questions those who united had to accept all the dogmas as they were. There could be no adulteration in order to allow corporate reunion of bodies believing less than the Catholic norm. Only on such conditions was unity possible. With such a viewpoint it is difficult to see how Overbeck justified his presence at the second conference at all since the invitations clearly stated that its aim was to establish a vague sort of "intercommunion and a confederation of Churches." This was not to amount to "amalgamation" and was not to be a detriment to peculiarities in doctrinal beliefs of the Churches involved.⁵⁵

According to Overbeck, Döllinger's invitation to the first conference was acceptable to the Orthodox because it declared the dogmas of Undivided Christendom as the basis for discussion. Such a period in Church history would therefore include the Seven Ecumenical Councils since they were all held before the schism – even at the earliest dating of the schism in the ninth century. No one should have participated in the conference who did not accept the Seven Councils. To his astonishment, however, the Anglicans, who did not accept the basis of the conference, were not only admitted as observers but as participators. "Thus the only safe principle of Union is sacrificed to Anglican propensities." Archpriest Janyshev also felt that the task would have been much simpler had the original program been adhered to.⁵⁶

Overbeck did not have much to say at the second Bonn Conference but what he did say caused a storm of indignation among the Anglicans. During the seventh session in which four articles were being discussed for acceptance, Dr. Overbeck proposed that the first article state the number of councils accepted as ecumenical. Many Anglicans, he said, would not agree with the Orthodox on the number. He mentioned that a certain Anglican cleric who had gone "over to the Orthodox Church" (James Chrystal) later found that he could not accept the Seventh Council as ecumenical.⁵⁷ His mere allusion to the number of Councils touched a tender spot with the Anglicans and caused an uproar. An anonymous writer in the *Saturday Review* (21 August 1875) attacked Overbeck for mentioning the Councils and said that "the first note of discord was introduced into the Conference by him..." and that only Döllinger's tact and the "conciliatory temper of the Orientals" prevented a rupture. Dr. Overbeck was accused of having the "ingrained bitterness of his Ultra-

⁵⁴ Dr. J.J. Overbeck, "Orthodoxy, Old Catholicism, and Anglicanism," OCR, VII (Part 1, 1878), 35, where he quoted from the *Deutscher Merkur*, No. 29, 1878, p. 240.

⁵⁵ Rev. J.J. Overbeck, "The Bonn Conferences: Impressions produced by their transactions," OCR, IV, No. 3 (July-September, 1875), 146-7, 150-1, 162. This was reprinted in separate form. Note that for a period of several years Overbeck styled himself "Reverend." Cf. [Francis Henry] Reusch, *Report of the Proceedings at the Reunion Conference held at Bonn between the 10th and 16th of August, 1875* (London, 1876), pp. liii-liv.

⁵⁶ OCR, *Ibid.*, 152-56, 162.

⁵⁷ Reusch, *Report*, pp. 92-93.

⁵⁸ Quoted in OCR, IV, No. 3 (July-September, 1875), 170-1; Cf. Johnston, *Henry Parry Liddon*, p. 190. As shown above (p. 4), Overbeck was never an Ultramontane nor an Anglican!

montane training” and of devoting his energies to the vilification of former communions he had abandoned (including Anglican).⁵⁸

The discussions between the Orthodox and the Old Catholics ceased with the conclusion of the second Bonn Conference. They were not to be resumed until much later. No further such conferences were held although some had, apparently, been planned and Döllinger had intended to continue in the same vein. The Anglicans blamed the discontinuance of the conference chiefly on “the machinations of Dr. Overbeck.”⁵⁹ Döllinger, too, explained their discontinuance by Overbeck’s agitation against union between the Old Catholics and the Orthodox. In letters to the committee of the Anglo-Continental Society, Döllinger mentioned, among other things, that the unsuccessful Bonn unity attempts were a result of Overbeck’s hostile agitation as well as the dissatisfaction of the Tractarian Dr. E.B. Pusey, who objected to the Anglicans giving into the Orthodox on the *Filioque* question.⁶⁰ Dobronvanov wrote, in his history of the Old Catholic Movement, that the unsuccessful attempts at unity resulted from the sympathy of the Old Catholic toward the Anglicans expressed at the conference. This sympathy brought in a disparity in principle between the Old Catholics and the Orthodox and with it unity became impossible.⁶¹

Some Anglicans found other reasons for the discontinuance of the conference. Moss thought the hostile relations between Russia and Britain before and during the Russo-Turkish War made it difficult to have theologians of those countries to meet together. After the war interest in such meetings waned and the Old Catholics were concerned with other, internal matters.⁶² Mayrick, of the Anglo-Continental Society, wrote that no further conferences were held as a result of Döllinger’s death (he died in 1890, however), and because the Old Catholics entered into closer relations with the Dutch Church with “consequent alienation from the Anglican Churches...”⁶³ Meyrick spoke highly of the learning of the Russians present at Bonn and said, with some surprise, that they were even able to argue with the great Döllinger! Meyrick did not think quite so highly of Orthodox converts. In the Anglo-Continental Society’s *Foreign Church Chronicle and Review* (Nos. 4, 8, 1878) Meyrick attacked Dr. Overbeck and Guettee, as well as Michaud with his Orthodox inclinations. Overbeck was singled out for abuse because of his writings but his arguments were not refuted.⁶⁴

Overbeck’s position on future conferences was that they could continue if Döllinger changed the direction in which he was headed, for the Anglicans were not unitable as they then were. His opinion was that if Döllinger continued to deal with them the sooner the Orthodox withdrew the better.⁶⁵ In the next few months Overbeck came to the conclusion that he was wasting his time if he awaited anything concrete from the Old Catholic movement. In his book *Die Bonner Unions-Konferenzen* (Halle, 1876), he stated that in 1870 “union” was closed than in 1876, and that by 1880 it probably would be even further removed. Things had gone as he had foreseen: Old Catholicism was getting rapidly to be like Anglicanism. Before the Bonn Conference he had written to Bishop Reinkens asking that the Anglicans be excluded “provisionally,” but this was something Reinkens refused to do. Overbeck stated that he knew from seventeen years’ daily contact with Anglicans and from his study of Anglican theology the “dangerous latitudinarian character of Anglican-

⁵⁹ Moss, *Old Catholic Movement*, p. 270; Cf. Papadopoulos, *Validity of Anglican Ordinations*, p. 35n.

⁶⁰ V. Dobronravov, “Desjat’ let iz istorii Starokatolicheskago dvizhenija (1871-1881),” *Khristianskor Chtenie*, II, No. 9-10 (September-October, 1890), 278-79.

⁶¹ *Ibid.*

⁶² Moss, *Old Catholic Movement*, *Ibid.*

⁶³ Frederick Meyrick, *Memories of Life at Oxford* (London, 1905), p. 264.

⁶⁴ Mentioned in OCR, VII (Part II, 1878), 153.

⁶⁵ OCR, IV, No. 3 (July-September, 1875), 182.

ism.” When at Munich and even more so at Cologne “aspects discrepant” from his were observed, Overbeck still did not lose hope and thought that the Old Catholics would overcome these wrong views and in the end agree with his ideas of Church unity. But he saw these views, through association with Anglicans, condensing and assuming definite form, and he came to realize that the Old Catholics were pursuing ends leading away from Orthodoxy and not toward her. Even at this stage Overbeck felt sympathetic to that small portion within Old Catholicism which “represents the positive current.”⁶⁶

Generally speaking, Overbeck’s evaluation of Old Catholicism’s progress was sad indeed. The movement had not had the success expected of it. He saw the reasons for this in the lax views of the Old Catholics. Such latitude scared off further conversions of Roman Catholics, who were wary of leaving their Church to join one of such “loose tenets, a body with so little ascetic fervour, with so little zeal for propagating what it considers to be the truth among dissenters, a body denouncing Monasticism and asceticism, abolishing Church Commandments, promising liturgical changes of momentous importance.” Roman Catholics would think twice before jumping from bad to worse. Had the Old Catholics remained on Catholic ground there was no doubt but that they would have gained considerable converts. Instead of this, some of the best Old Catholic leaders left them and returned to Rome. Overbeck decried Old Catholic laxity about Confession, fasting, the permission for priests to marry after ordination and as many times as desired in succession; to marry widows and non-Catholics, and to allow priest’s children to be brought up as Protestants. There was nothing to prevent an Old Catholic from marrying a Jewess as an Anglican cleric had recently done. Overbeck was afraid the Old Catholics would become a kind of Broad Church.⁶⁷

As far as Overbeck’s scheme for the restoration of Western Orthodoxy was concerned, the Old Catholics took no official note of it at the Bonn Conference, while the *Deutscher Merkur* repeatedly denounced his scheme as unseasonable.⁶⁸ At the second Bonn Conference Bishop Reinkens spoke very plainly when he said: “Let me remind Professor Overbeck that not one of us thinks for a moment of going over to the Eastern Church.”⁶⁹ By the Autumn of 1876 Overbeck’s interlude with the Old Catholics had ended.

⁶⁶ OCR, V, No. 4 (October-December, 1876), 276, 278, 283.

⁶⁷ OCR, VII (Part I, 1878), 33-35; Cf. Moss, *Old Catholic Movement*, p. 256.

⁶⁸ OCR, *Ibid.*, 31.

⁶⁹ Reusch, *Report*, p. 93.

OVERBECK'S SCHEME AND THE PHANAR

SINCE Overbeck's hopes of seeing the Old Catholics accomplish his work of restoring the Orthodox Church of the West were dashed, he again resumed his negotiations with Orthodox authorities. After the approval of his plan in St. Petersburg, the Russian Synod had solicited the sanction of the Eastern Patriarchs. Somewhere the matter had bogged down. With the frequent changes of Patriarchs at Constantinople and the disturbed situation of the Balkans, the transactions were continually interrupted and protracted. The Church leaders at Constantinople were busy with the Romanian declaration of ecclesiastical independence in 1864 which was not solved until 1885. They were occupied with the Bulgarian Question and the problem of the Bulgarian schism (1870-72), and then the Russo-Turkish War commenced (1877-78).

In the latter part of 1876 Overbeck addressed "An Appeal to the Patriarchs and Holy Synods of the Orthodox Catholic Church"⁷⁰ asking them to "acknowledge our Western Orthodox Catholic Church, and to resuscitate her by sanctioning our Western liturgy." He pointed out that his group had not formed any "separatist conventicle" but had attended services at the Russian or Greek church. While waiting patiently for eight years for the scheme to be realized, some of the petitioners had died, others left the country, some, who had tired of waiting, joined the Roman Church, while still others returned to the Anglican communion. However, a "small band" had remained loyal to Orthodoxy and how renewed its request for the restoration of the Western Church. They had no doubt that the hierarchs would "understand and fulfill their sacred duty, regardless of human considerations and infernal intrigues."⁷¹

Overbeck's allusion to "intrigues" no doubt referred to the protests of Anglican ecclesiastics to the Levant against Orthodox proselytism in Great Britain, as a result of which the Constantinopolitan Patriarch issued a prohibition against such proselytism. The Anglican protests, which seemed to have stemmed from the activities of S. G. Hatherly, of whom see below, greatly rankled Overbeck. He was irritated by the fact that the Orthodox Greek authorities accepted complaints from the heterodox against their own sons. Nevertheless, he wrote to the Patriarchs that he was not to be deterred "by the asseveration of Heterodox Bishops that they enjoy your favour, and would know how to thwart our scheme." He agreed with the Patriarch in "repudiating a certain kind of Proselytism" which used dishonorable methods to attract converts. But, he said, no Orthodox person in England ever thought of such a thing. In prohibiting proselytism the Patriarch of Constantinople had taken measures "against an imaginary foe." Overbeck suggested that the Orthodox authorities seek information from Orthodox persons in England and not listen to Anglicans who regard everything from a heterodox viewpoint. The faithful sons of the Church deserved more confidence, whatever their humble position, than high-placed Anglicans.⁷²

Regardless of any Patriarchal prohibition to proselytize, Overbeck not only felt under no obligation to cease his efforts at converting the heterodox but insisted on the "right of religious controversy" as well.⁷³ Without religious controversy those without the Church could never find their way to her. The prohibition to proselytize could not possibly mean to forbid "converting a man to the Orthodox faith" for it would be a crime to keep even one soul out of Christ's only true Church. Proselytism in its bad connotation could only

⁷⁰ This was appended to *Die Bonner Unions-Conferenzen* (Halle, 1876), the last two chapters of which appeared in English in the OCR, V, No. 4 (October-December, 1876), 276-288.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 283-84.

⁷² *Ibid.*, 284, 284-85n. Overbeck developed his viewpoint further in his article "On Religious Toleration: Conversion versus Proselytism," OCR, X (1883), 1-36.

⁷³ "Religious Controversy: Its use and abuse," OCR, VII (Part I, 1878), 72-96.

be applied to “dirty Jesuitical jobbery.” There was no Orthodox Patriarch who could make him stop converting Anglican heretics to Orthodoxy. Overbeck wondered about the Greek outlook on Orthodoxy’s mission in the world. He knew the Greeks were proud of their Church as a national institution but was not so sure that they realized that the Orthodox Catholic Church was destined by Christ to embrace all of mankind. He wondered if the Greeks were anxious to propagate the faith and was thankful for the Russian branch of Orthodoxy which had never ceased missionary work. The Russian Church kept Orthodoxy from becoming a “tribal Church” like Judaism. He called upon the Orthodox to do their duty and assist in spreading the faith.⁷⁴ Despite his impassioned plea for the right to proselytize, Overbeck stated elsewhere that the Orthodox in England had instinctively refrained from proselytizing because there was nothing to offer converts but membership in a Russian or Greek national church where services were in a foreign tongue and according to the Eastern Rite which was foreign to the Western mind.⁷⁵

After addressing the Eastern Patriarchs in 1876, Overbeck again waited for a reply. Meanwhile he rapidly concluded that the realization of the scheme was vital especially for the children of the petitioners, who were growing up without hearing “the Word of God preached” and attended services performed in a foreign language. He was apprehensive lest they turn from religion entirely for private devotions at home could not replace the “power of effective Church life.” With no action from the Levant for three years, Overbeck decided personally to take the matter in hand.

I went to Constantinople in August 1879, to stir up the sympathies of the Church authorities. His Holiness the present Patriarch, Joakim III, received me like a father, and invited me to be his guest during my stay in the capital. Thus I had daily occasion to converse with His Holiness, to explain our wants and wishes, and to enlist his lively interest in our behalf. He promised me (what since has been done) that our request should be discussed by the Holy Synod. He authorized me to preach in private to the Western Orthodox... In his last letter to me the Patriarch asks me to inform: 1. When a sufficient number of Westerns have expressed their wish to have their Old Western Church restored; 2. To show the means of supporting priest and Church; 3. To submit the Western Ritual to be used for approbation.⁷⁶

Patriarch Joachim, as well as the bishops of the Russian Synod, seemed to have approached the matter more realistically than Overbeck himself. While the latter spoke of reviving the whole ancient Catholic Church of the West, they spoke of establishing a parish. When the Russian Synod received the petition it authorized the celebration of the Eastern Liturgy in English at the Russian Embassy church in London until a large enough community of English converts warranted the establishment of Western rites.⁷⁷ The Russian Synod had previously revised and approved an English translation of the Liturgy made by S.G. Hatherly and published in 1865.⁷⁸ However, the Liturgy was only occasionally celebrated in English in the first half of the 1870’s at the London Embassy church,⁷⁹ which seems to indicate that after the death of Fr. E.I. Popoff in 1875 the priests attached to the Embassy church did not have his zeal for assisting the English Orthodox in their spiritual life. Overbeck’s allusion to the lack of sermons seems to indicate that little was done to help them achieve a better understanding of their newly-acquired faith. Hatherly, interestingly enough, admitted that he was not particularly pleased with his own translation of the Liturgy and preferred to use another version

⁷⁴ *Ibid.*, 77-80, 83, 85.

⁷⁵ OCR, IX (Part I, 1880), 9.

⁷⁶ *The True Old English Church*, p. 14.

⁷⁷ *The Present Crisis*, p. 9n.

⁷⁸ *The Divine Liturgies of our Holy Father, John the Golden-mouthed (S. Chrysostom), and Basil the Great*. From the Greek and Russian (London, 1865).

⁷⁹ N.O., “Korrespondentsia iz Londona,” *Ibid.*, cols. 1586-87.

when he had the occasion to “make” the Liturgy.⁸⁰ After Overbeck’s return from the East he opened a small oratory in his own London home where he preached to his little group of followers on Sunday afternoons. He later published two volumes of *Addresses to the Western Orthodox*.⁸¹

In 1876 when Overbeck appealed to the Eastern Patriarchs he had reached rather a low ebb in his hopes for the approval of his scheme and he no longer sought to collect signatures to a petition, for he had learned from sad experience that to collect signatures on the basis of vague hopes was not justified. After his return from Constantinople his hopes were again revived and he called upon all who were interested to come forth and show that they desired the restoration of Western Orthodoxy. The Greek hesitance in granting approval before this he explained by the “newness and importance” of the question and because the Greeks may have feared taking the wrong step and compromising themselves.⁸²

At the Phanar a committee was appointed to examine Overbeck’s scheme. In 1882 it gave a favourable report, whereupon the Patriarch approved the project provisionally upon condition that the other Churches concur. There was, apparently, a protest from the Synod of the Church of Greece and the Patriarchate subsequently dropped the whole matter. It has been said that the Russian Synod also dropped the idea in 1884,⁸³ following the advice of Archpriest Eugene Konstantinovich Smirnov (1845-1923) who had succeeded Fr. Popoff at the Russian Imperial Embassy church in London. Douglas gave the impression, on the other hand, that the scheme was not abandoned by the Russians until much later and that Fr. Smirnov continued to support it until a few years before his death. Overbeck, writing in 1885, still hoped “that our Western Orthodox Church will soon be an accomplished fact.”⁸⁴

In discussing the religious life of his group in 1885, Overbeck indicated that they attend the Orthodox church but that they were “badly situated in having only once a week a Liturgy and no religious instruction besides.” He felt it his duty to supply this deficiency by instructing the youth in the faith. He was fearful lest their religious life slowly disappear and cease altogether, leaving only an “empty shadow of mechanical formalism” with the danger of forgetting the doctrine and precepts of the Church. To combat this danger he devoted a short time each Sunday afternoon to religious instruction.⁸⁵

⁸⁰ S.G. Hatherly, “Translated Greek Office-Books,” *The Scottish Review*, XIX (January, 1892), 137.

⁸¹ (London, 1880, 1881).

⁸² OCR, V. No. 4 (October-December, 1876), 287; *Ibid.*, IX (Part I, 1880), 13-14.

⁸³ Georges Florovsky, “Orthodox Ecumenism,” *Ibid.*

⁸⁴ Papadopoulos, *Validity of Anglican Ordinations*, p. 35n; OCR, XI (Part I, 1885), 58.

⁸⁵ “Addresses to the Young,” OCR, XI (Part I, 1885), 58-59.

REASONS FOR THE FAILURE OF THE SCHEME

THE final reason for the Greek refusal to approve Overbeck's scheme is not clear. Douglas and Archbishop Chrysostom Papadopoulos (1868-1938) were of the opinion that it was because the Greek Church did not desire to "sanction the setting up of a proselytizing Orthodox Church in England."⁸⁶ But the problem hardly seems this simple. If this were the case why was Overbeck received so hospitably in Constantinople, authorized to preach, and his scheme approved by the Patriarchal committee and the Patriarchate itself? That the Greeks were not averse to proselytizing among Anglicans is shown by the reception and even ordination of two Anglicans just as Overbeck was putting his scheme into motion.

The first of these, James Chrystal (1832-1908), was a priest of the Protestant Episcopal Church who, on the eve of Theophany, 5 January 1869 (O.S.), was received into the Orthodox Church at the Cathedral of Hermopolis through (re-) Baptism and Chrismation. Archbishop Alexander Lycurgos of Syra and Tenos, who received him, soon after ordained him to the priesthood and in a short time Chrystal was made an Archimandrite and a "Great Catechist" of the Patriarchate of Constantinople.⁸⁷

In 1870 Archbishop Lycurgos visited England to consecrate a Greek church in Liverpool and his ordination of Chrystal was well known there. He was nevertheless wined and dined by the Anglicans and behaved in such an intimate manner with them that Overbeck and his friends were somewhat distressed. Some of the latter felt that the English Church could not possibly be schismatic and heretical if Lycurgos was so friendly with its leaders and visited its churches. On the other hand, in a long discussion with Overbeck, Lycurgos "*praised our Petition as unexceptionably Orthodox.*"⁸⁸ As a result of the Archbishop's seeming inconsistency, some of Overbeck's petitioners withdrew their names. A correspondent of the Berlin newspaper *National-Zeitung*, writing 11 April 1870, reported speeches given at a banquet in honor of Lycurgos. Among other things, A.P. Stanley (1815-81), the Broad Church Dean of Westminster Abbey, spoke of the need for Anglican-Orthodox recognition and of mutually refraining from recruiting proselytes from each other. The Bishop of London, John Jackson, speaking after Stanley, decried the type of unity proposed by Overbeck.⁸⁹ No matter how Lycurgos behaved overtly, he still was able to praise Overbeck's work in private. The same could be true of the hierarchs in the East.⁹⁰

Another figure prominent in Orthodox circles in Great Britain was Stephen Georgeson Hatherly (1827-1905). An Anglican layman, he was received into Orthodoxy in London in 1856 by (re-) Baptism. In 1871 he was ordained to the priesthood at Constantinople by Metropolitan Basil of Anchialos. The Archbishop of Canterbury, Archibald Campbell Tait (1811-82) is said to have denounced his missionary zeal to the Constantinopolitan Patriarch who prohibited him "to proselytize a single member of the Anglican Church."⁹¹ Despite the prohibition, however, in a letter from Patriarch Joachim II to Metropolitan Basil written in 1874, the Patriarch showed his pleasure at Hatherly's work and bestowed his blessing upon him.⁹² The following

⁸⁶ Papadopoulos, *Validity of Anglican Ordinations*, p. 34n.

⁸⁷ *The Church Weekly*, I (1870), 158, 163. The erratic Chrystal soon repudiated his ties with the Orthodox Church and, upon his return to America, formed his own Baptist-type sect.

⁸⁸ OCR, III, No. 1-6 (January-June, 1871), 48. Italics are Overbeck's.

⁸⁹ Reported in *Litovakija Eparkhial'nyja Vedomosti*, VIII, No. 7 (15 April 1870), 258.

⁹⁰ For a description of Lycurgos' visit to England see: G. Williams, *A Collection of Documents relating chiefly to the Visit of Alexander, Archbishop of Syros and Tenos, to England in 1870* (London, 1876). For two letters relative to the dealings of Chrystal with Archbishop Lycurgos see *The Record*, 21 February 1870.

⁹¹ Florovsky, "Orthodox Ecumenism," 33.

⁹² S.G. Hatherly (trans.), *The Office for the Lord's Day* (London, [1880]), pp. vii-viii.

year Hatherly was honored by elevation to the dignity of Archpriest. Thus, despite prohibitions to the contrary, Hatherly, whose very *raison d'être* was to proselytize Anglicans, was honored and blessed by the highest prelates of the Church.

Hatherly, who worked for similar goals as Overbeck but using different means, was not a collaborator of Overbeck and is said to have had a controversy with him. Hatherly was not interested in Western Orthodoxy and simply desired Eastern services in English with a native clergy. It had not been possible to uncover any definite evidence of contention between Hatherly and Overbeck, and Hatherly's name never once figured in any of the literature issued by Overbeck available to this writer. Only once, at the very beginning of his work, did Overbeck allude to a "few single voices" in Britain who advocated privately that converts simply join the Eastern Church, adopting her Church formularies in an English translation. He conceded that this would be the simplest way of establishing an Orthodox Church in England but insisted it would not be the right or most profitable way.⁹³

The reasons for the Greek refusal to approve Overbeck's scheme still are not clarified. To say that Overbeck had opponents in Britain would be an understatement at the least. His work was resented by various high-placed members of the Establishment, but more particularly by those in favor of intercommunion with the Orthodox Church. Dr. Frazier, Chairman of the Intercommunion Committee of the Convocation of Canterbury, condemned Overbeck's scheme as "a schismatic proceeding, and a mere copying of the uncatholic and uncanonical aggression of the Church of Rome."⁹⁴ Overbeck was accused of trying to establish a "new Church" in order to proselytize "within the jurisdiction of the Anglican Episcopate." Dr. E.B. Pusey (1800-82), the well-known Tractarian leader, took notice of Overbeck and called him "the blind leader of the blind."⁹⁵ The intercommunionist Bishop Henry Cotterill of Edinburgh, writing in the Autumn of 1872 to Madame Olga Novikoff, described Overbeck as having a "cast-iron Christianity" and of being "a very low type indeed." Madame Novikoff, who moved in such circles as that of the British statesman W.E. Gladstone, was a friend of Overbeck. She corresponded with him for thirty years or more, and was greatly interested in his scheme. She defended him before his foes. In Bishop Cotterill's opinion, Overbeck "had brought over to the Orthodox Church the intolerance of the Roman Communion" and was a *bête noire* to the majority of Anglicans. "The self-complacent Pharisaism of the man would be amusing if it were not sad to think that an un-Christian spirit like this animates so many."⁹⁶ Since Overbeck was so intensely disliked, it is not difficult to imagine that some concrete action in the form of protests to Orthodox authorities was taken by his Anglican enemies.

Overbeck was not one to be frightened by his adversaries. To those Anglicans who misrepresented his scheme as a concentrated attack upon the Established Church and an attempt to establish another English Church alongside the Establishment, he answered that he doubted whether the Establishment could even be termed a Church. Moreover, his aim was much broader: to restore the entire Orthodox Catholic Church throughout the West. To those who denounced his work as an attempt to add to the number of schismatic churches, he said that the Anglicans who closed their eyes on their own schism had always admitted that the Orthodox Church was not schismatical. How, then, could he and his friends who were in communion with the Orthodox Church possibly be schismatics?⁹⁷ Overbeck seemed almost pleased with the fact that his group

⁹³ OCR, I, No. 6-9 (June-September, 1867), 194.

⁹⁴ Florovsky, "Orthodox Ecumenism," *Ibid.*

⁹⁵ In his preface to F.G. Lee (ed.), *Essays on the Re-union of Christendom* (London, 1867); Cf. OCR, *Ibid.*, 143-44.

⁹⁶ W.T. Stead (ed.), *The M.P. for Russia: Reminiscences and Correspondence of Madame Olga Novikoff* (London, 1909), Vol. I, p. 144.

⁹⁷ OCR, III, No. 1-6 (January-June, 1871), 47.

was attacked by those in high places: “We are reviled and insulted; and even in the meetings of Heterodox Bishops voices are heard against the establishment of our ‘*schismatic*’ (!!!) Church.” Despite the numerical insignificance of his group, the Anglicans busied themselves with them as if they were a great army. Did the English Church feel itself so weak that it feared a handful of people who had neither riches nor influence?⁹⁸

Despite the antagonism of Anglican bishops and higher churchmen towards Overbeck and his scheme, there were, indubitably, those Anglicans who were interested in it. T.W. Mossman, who, along with F.G. Lee and J.T. Seccombe, is reputed to have had a hand in the founding of The Order of Corporate Reunion in the 1870’s in order to provide the Church of England with a valid episcopate, wrote in 1877 to Lee evincing interest in Overbeck’s work. He asked to be “put... into communication with the promoters of the Autocephalous English Church in communion with the Churches of the East.” He inquired: “Is not Mr. John Baxter of Dorlaston, and a Mr. Hathaway [*sic!*] of Wolverhampton, or somewhere in that neighborhood, among them?” Mossman was of the opinion that if “an orthodox and Catholic chair” were to be established in some city it would signal “the beginning of a second Pentecost” in England and he said he would feel “very much disposed” to join such a movement if it were to begin in the neighborhood of Lincoln.⁹⁹

Despite the fact that Overbeck stressed that his scheme was more comprehensive, the Anglicans considered it as aimed directly at them and at the winning of the Anglo-Saxon world to his Western Orthodox Church by individual conversion. This was distasteful to them for more than one reason. Those among the Anglicans who believed in the Branch-Theory of the Church, *i.e.*, that the Church Catholic was made up of three separate branches: Greek, Roman, and Anglo-Catholic, desired intercommunion, a sort of mutual recognition and fellowship, between the “branches” of the Church. The intercommunionists stressed the need for a study of each other’s position with an aim toward closer friendship. This would result eventually in the recognition of Anglican Orders on the part of the East and the right of individuals to communicate in each other’s churches. The intercommunionists were not particularly interested in doctrinal unity but only desired recognition of the status quo. Feeling that the Church of England was the branch of the Catholic Church in those parts, Anglo-Catholics were resentful of the mere presence of any other branch of the Catholic Church in England working, without leave, within the jurisdiction of the Anglican episcopate. And for such another branch boldly to receive converts from the Anglican branch was most unbearable because such actions proved that the Church of England’s claims to catholicity were not recognized. The Anglicans felt that most Orthodox theologians were ignorant of true Anglicanism, and the presence “on the spot” of such men as Overbeck, with his warped opinion of Anglicanism, only “reinforced their Orthodox authorities prejudices...” Instead of the day for eventual intercommunion between the Eastern Church and the Church of England drawing closer, Overbeck and his friends exerted every effort “to prevent anything which might bring the two churches nearer...”¹⁰⁰

Once the Archbishop of Canterbury protested to the Phanar against Fr. Hatherly’s activities, there is

⁹⁸ OCR, V, No. 4 (October-December, 1876), 285. Italics are Overbeck’s.

⁹⁹ Henry R.T. Brandreth, *Dr. Lee of Lambeth: A Chapter in Parenthesis in the History of the Oxford Movement* (London, 1951), pp. 119-20. The Hathaway mentioned is without a doubt Hatherly, while the John Baxter is probably John Allen Baxter, an English Orthodox who died 3 May 1879 at the age of 27 at Ludlow. He was the first of Overbeck’s followers to die (without last rites). Overbeck said of Baxter that he was not learned. Overbeck felt the difficulty of inviting friends to join his group for he could not promise them the consolation of priestly ministrations in their last hours (OCR, VIII (1879), 209-210). As for T.W. Mossman, Overbeck reviewed his book *A History of the Catholic Church of Jesus Christ from the Death of St. John to the Middle of the Second Century* (London, 1873) in the OCR, VII (Part II, 1878), 170-8, where he mentioned that Mossman was said to have been one of three bishops of The Order of Corporate Reunion, the principles of which he found to be inconsistent with sound logic. He made no allusion to Seccombe. Overbeck was surprised to find Mossman a Presbyterian in his views on the Apostolic ministry and latitudinarian in many of his theological views. There is no evidence that Mossman ever contacted Overbeck.

¹⁰⁰ Douglas in a footnote in Papadopoulos, *The Validity of Anglican Ordinations*, p. 3n.

no reason to doubt that the Anglican authorities would exert pressure on the Greeks because of Overbeck's scheme, especially since the latter was potentially much more threatening to them. The English were not backward about making their opinions known in the Middle East, and British policies played a larger role in the destinies of the dying Ottoman Empire. Overbeck stated that there was a period when "Anglican influence was paramount (not to say, omnipotent) at Constantinople."¹⁰¹ In 1840 the Sultan deposed Patriarch Gregory VI upon directions of the English ambassador Lord Stratford de Redcliffe. As for the protest from the Synod of the Church of Greece (independent of Constantinople since 1833) which, it is asserted, halted Overbeck's scheme at the Phanar – this, too, could very well have been British-inspired. It has been said that when one collates the "pronouncements issued by Greek ecclesiastics with the political events and pressures which paralleled their appearance, one soon discovers an obvious relation between their interpretation of Orthodox Canon law and faith and the political tensions to which they were subjected."¹⁰² In the days Overbeck was seeking approval of his plan at Constantinople, Greece was almost completely under the thumb of England. King George I received his Greek throne in 1863 by nomination and approval of the British Government, just as had King Otho before him. Greece also was heavily in debt to Great Britain which took advantage of the situation by interfering in the internal affairs of that country. It is, therefore, not inconceivable that Queen Victoria, the "legal head of the protestant religion established by law in England," upon the advice of one of her political appointees, e.g., the Archbishop of Canterbury, exerted pressure upon the Greek Synod through the Greek Government to block Overbeck's scheme already approved at Constantinople.

The British may well have been apprehensive of Overbeck's scheme which, if successful, could have wrecked havoc with the Establishment. The time was particularly ripe for such a movement as Overbeck's. There was much unrest within the ranks of the Ritualists. This was the period in which British secular and ecclesiastical leaders were doing their utmost to stifle the Anglo-Catholic movement within the Church of England. The oppression of Ritualists reached its highest point in the Public Worship Regulation Act of 1874 (drafted by the same Archbishop Tait who had protested Hatherly) which was passed to suppress the growth of ritualism in the Established Church. In the period from 1877 to 1882 several leading High Churchmen were prosecuted and even imprisoned for their ritual practices. Some Ritualists expected momentarily to be expelled from the Establishment. There was a continuous flow of converts to Rome and each blow against the High Churchmen or their Catholic principles gave the Romeward flow more impetus. Overbeck's proposed non-Roman Catholic Church which, conceivably, might have not only diverted this stream into Orthodoxy but taken with it a greater number hesitant to go Romeward, was a potential danger to the Establishment. Dr. Overbeck's scheme could have hastened the crumbling of the Establishment and caused all sorts of problems for both Church and State. There were undoubtedly some Anglican churchmen, even of the Ritualist camp, who did not wish the Establishment to fall simply because of the "loaves and the fishes," *i.e.*, because many livings were involved. It is, therefore, not unreasonable to see the possibility of British pressure on the Patriarchate and Greek Synod.

J.A. Douglas, translator of Archbishop Chrysostom Papadopoulos' book on Anglican Orders, in a long four-page footnote devoted to Overbeck's scheme which exhibited something of the intercommunionist animosity described above, interestingly enough did not even mention the Greeks in connection with the failure of the scheme. In his view Overbeck's failure was bound to Russian foreign policy. Great Britain had been the chief obstacle in the fulfillment of Russian aspirations in the Balkans and the Levant. If matters had

¹⁰¹ OCR, VII (Part I, 1878), 77.

¹⁰² Kyrill A.W. Johnson, "The Prestige of the Oecumenical Patriarchate," *The Orthodox American*, [No. 35], October 1944-February 1945, p. 9.

stood differently Constantinople would be within grasp of the Russian Empire. The men most active in the Oxford Movement in the 1870's and 1880's had yearnings for union with the Orthodox Church. Such a frame of mind made them ripe for propaganda about Turkish oppression of Christian subjects. Under Gladstone's leadership the High Churchmen waged a campaign which in the 1870's brought a drastic change in English foreign policy. The Russian Government was, therefore, quite interested in the ecclesiastical affairs of Britain. Few Russian officials were willing to risk Anglo-Catholic sympathy for an improbably and perhaps only visionary conversion of any large number of Anglicans to Orthodoxy. It was the Tsarist statesman, therefore, who saw to it that the setting up of a Western Orthodox Church in England was thwarted.¹⁰³

"N.O.", probably the inverted initials of Olga Novikoff, also blamed Russia for the failure of Overbeck's scheme, but not because of any deliberate planning by Russian policy makers. The reason was simple inertia. Just as in state politics the Russians were unprepared for questions of the day to come, so in religious policies the Russians did not know how to make the best use of opportunities falling into their laps. All of Overbeck's energies were wasted and not put to use in that most brilliant period of his activity, the first two-thirds of the 1870's. The viewpoint, thus, is the opposite of that expressed by Douglas. The Russians allowed Overbeck's scheme to go by default, to fail because of the lack of a definite policy. As far as the Greeks were concerned, they simply were not enough interested in the affair to try it out.¹⁰⁴

Whatever the reasons for Overbeck's failure, his work and writings, at the very least, awoke some Orthodox churchmen to a realization that their Church had a mission outside of its Eastern confines. Russian scholars were stimulated to study more carefully the Western traditions, and numerous monographs of Western liturgical usages appeared. The Old Catholic and Anglican theological positions were scrutinized closely by theologians. Through Overbeck several capable people were led into the Orthodox Church while many others learned of her existence and her theological position through his writings. Several important Orthodox theological works found their way into English by way of his journal. Dr. G. Florovsky said of Overbeck's scheme:

There was an obvious utopian element in the scheme, and it failed to attract any appreciable number of adherents. And yet it was not just a fantastic dream. The question raised by Overbeck was pertinent, even if his own answer to it was confusedly conceived. And probably the vision of Overbeck was greater than his personal interpretation.¹⁰⁵

Overbeck's lack of success with his scheme was, ironically, reflected in his own home. "N.O.," who has been cited before, asserted that even Overbeck's family did not become Orthodox. It is known, however, that they did become Orthodox, that his whole family was received into the Church by Fr. Popoff. Overbeck's fears concerning the loss of the faith by the English Orthodox, and particularly the youth, because of the lack of instruction and regular Church life, could well have been based upon observations within his own home. His family had so strayed from the faith that it was thought not even Orthodox! Dr. Overbeck's death, on 3 November 1905 at the age of eighty-four, was barely noticed. There was only a small item in *The London Daily News* to the effect that he was an extraordinary linguist, who knew more than two dozen languages and spoke fluently in fourteen of them. He was buried by clergy of the Russian Embassy church on 7 November.¹⁰⁶

¹⁰³ Papadopoulos, *Validity of Anglican Ordinations*, pp. 33-34n.

¹⁰⁴ "Korrespondentsia iz Londona," cols., 1585-86.

¹⁰⁵ Florovsky, "Orthodox Ecumenism," 32-33.

¹⁰⁶ "Korrespondentsia iz Londona," cols., 1587-87.

OVERBECK'S COLLABORATORS

A.V. Richardson

AMONG the men who collaborated with Overbeck in his scheme for the resuscitation of the Western Orthodox Church was Athanasius V. Richardson. Richardson was an Anglican priest, probably of the Episcopal Church of Scotland, who was united to the Orthodox through Chrismation by Archpriest D. Vasil'ev in Nice, France, in 1861. At the time of his reception into the Church he requested ordination. After "receiving valid orders from an Eastern bishop" he wanted to celebrate Orthodox services in Great Britain in the English language for persons ready "openly to accept and confess the Orthodox faith." Due to a serious illness Richardson was prevented from carrying out his intention.¹⁰⁷

Somewhat of a controversy arose over Richardson's reception and request for ordination. Fr. E.I. Popoff of London wrote to the Russian Synod in St. Petersburg saying that the Greek priest in London insisted that Richardson had to be (re-) Baptized. Hatherly also wrote to the Russian Synod in 1862, and said the Synod ought to require Baptism by immersion of all converts who were candidates for the priesthood. Hatherly, at the same time a lay member of the Greek church in Liverpool, and himself having been (re-) Baptized by the Greeks, considered Richardson's reception by the Sacrament of Chrismation insufficient to ordain him. Metropolitan Philaret Drozdov of Moscow, however, disagreed with this view and stated that it was perfectly canonical to ordain Richardson without (re-) Baptism. The controversy caused Alexis Petrovich Akhmatov (1818-70), then Chief-Procurator of the Synod (1862-64), to write to Philaret that the differences between the Greek and Russian Churches in the matter of the reception of converts was serious and ought to be resolved. Such differences might be a cause for scandal and could shake any prospective convert's faith in the Church.¹⁰⁸

Concerning Richardson's possible ordination, Philaret wrote on 28 February to the Chief-Procurator:

If he had asked to recognize him as a priest, this would have been a difficult question... The solution of it should weigh upon another consideration: Did the Anglican Church preserve the succession of episcopal ordination uninterruptedly? This is subject to doubt. However, he asked a new ordination. Against this I can visualize no difficulties on the part of the Church canons...¹⁰⁹

In another place Metropolitan Philaret reiterated his opinion that Richardson could be ordained. He never was because it was felt that it would cause offense in the Orthodox world of London.¹¹⁰

Richardson apparently soon joined ranks with Overbeck and probably was one of the original petitioners. He made some contributions to *The Orthodox Catholic Review*, starting in 1868, in the form of several short stories based on themes from early Church history. He also versified several prayers and hymns from the Greek. Richardson most likely was the "clergyman lately seceded from the Anglican Church" who anonymously authored the pamphlet *The Present Crisis*.¹¹¹

¹⁰⁷ *Khristianskoe Chtenie*, 1867, I, 287.

¹⁰⁸ *Pisma dukhovnykh i svetskikh lits k mitropolitu moskovskomu Filaretu (s 1812 po 1867)*, Issued with biographical and explanatory notes by A.N. L'vov (St. Petersburg, 1900), pp. 581-82.

¹⁰⁹ *Pisma Filareta, mitropolita moskovskago i kolomenskago k vysochajahim osobam i rasnym drugim litsam*, Collected and issued by Savva, Archbishop of Tver and Kashin (Tver, 1888), II, pp. 109-110.

¹¹⁰ *Sobranie mnenii i otzyvov Filareta, mitropolita moskovskago i kolomenskago, po uchebnym i tserkovno-gosudarstvennym voprosam*, ed. Archbishop Savva (Moscow, 1887), Tome V, Part I, pp. 277-85.

¹¹¹ See above, pp. 21-22 and footnote #29.

The author of *The Present Crisis* wrote a series of letters to the Scottish newspaper, *The Dundee Advertiser*, starting with 22 July 1868. The occasion of the conversion of a Mr. Humphrey to the Roman Church furnished the reason for the first letter but in others the writer discussed the Anglican dilemma in terms similar to Overbeck's. The writer, who signed himself "Orthodox," stated that he had been an Anglican priest ten years, but had seceded to Orthodoxy and was hoping for the Western Orthodox Church soon to be refounded. He called upon the Scottish Anglicans to become Orthodox and to sign Overbeck's petition. He said prospective converts ought to apply to him or the priest of the Russian Church in London for admittance into Orthodoxy. "Orthodox" probably was a former member of the Scottish Episcopal diocese of Brechin. In *The Present Crisis* he gives his address as Craigie, Perth. In the same issue of *The Orthodox Catholic Review* in which "The Present Crisis" first appeared, the first paraphrase of a Greek hymn by "A.R.," i.e. Athanasius Richardson, also was printed. There seems little doubt but that "A.R." and "Orthodox" were one and the same.¹¹²

Another book, *The Canonical Hours, from Ancient Sources* (2nd ed., London, 1868), "By a Catholic Priest," was probably also the work of Richardson. Overbeck stated that when the book was first written the author had been an Anglican but that he had since left and joined the Orthodox Church. Overbeck hoped that a third edition might appear but with the changes necessary to make of it an Orthodox production. Among the changes he suggested were the elimination of post-1054 Saints together with the Apostles and Athanasian Creeds which are not used in the Orthodox Church. The book could very well have been Richardson's¹¹³ because of his interest in liturgical matters as seen from his translations of liturgical hymns and offices.¹¹⁴

J.T. Seccombe

Another interesting collaborator of Overbeck was Dr. John Thomas Seccombe (1835-1895) of Terrington Lodge, near King's Lynn in Norfolk County. He was the eldest son of Sir Thomas Lawrence Seccombe, G.C.I.E., K.C.S.I., who, for many years had been financial secretary and later Assistant Under Secretary of State for India. J.T. Seccombe received the M.D. degree at the University of St. Andrews (Scotland) in 1856 and began his medical practice at Terrington in 1862. He became a member of the Royal College of Surgeons in 1858 and a Licentiate of the Society of Apothecaries of London the following year. He also studied at the University College, London. Seccombe had many out-of-the-way interests and an extensive and minute knowledge of many subjects. A Fellow of the Royal Astronomical Society, he constructed a powerful telescope with an eight-inch Newtonian reflector in his garden. He was esteemed as an authority on change-ringing and had some repute as a local antiquary, having written a paper on the beautifully decorated St. Clement's church of Terrington for the Norfolk and Norwich Archaeological Society. Seccombe was an ardent admirer of Pasteur. After visiting the Institute at Paris in 1863, he lectured on the newest theories on inoculation. He was medical officer of the fourth and fifth districts of the Wisbech Union and surgeon of the Lynn district of the Great Northern Railway. He belonged to a whole range of different societies and acted as a Justice of the Peace for the county of Norfolk from 1866 until his death, 27 January 1895, from heart disease.¹¹⁵

¹¹² OCR, II, No. 1-12 (January-February, 1868), 158-71, 262.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 271; *The Dictionary of Anonymous and Pseudonymous English Literature* (London, 1926), I, p. 276, however, ascribed *The Canonical Hours* to James F.B. Gordon, D.D.

¹¹⁴ *The Office of the Churching of Women, according to the ritual of the Orthodox Eastern Church*, Translated from the Greek Euchologion by the Rev. Athanasius Richardson (London, 1875).

¹¹⁵ *British Medical Journal*, I (16 February 1895), 400 (Obituary); *The London Medical Directory* for 1891.

In addition to his many other interests, Seccombe was interested in church history, patristic writings, and liturgy. He had evidently shown inclinations towards the religious life early in his career and had once been a novice in the Cistercian Abbey of Mount St. Bernard.¹¹⁶ At any rate his interest in religious matters remained with him the remainder of his life. "With keen scientific interests he was also an ardent theologian, and this somewhat unusual juxtaposition of tastes was thoroughly characteristic of a remarkably versatile mind."¹¹⁷ Seccombe's religious propensities led him to become associated with the *episcopus vagans* Julius (or Jules) Ferrete who came to England in the Summer of 1866, claiming to have been consecrated Bishop of Iona by a Jacobite Syrian bishop.¹¹⁸ Seccombe is said to have joined Ferrete and to have been consecrated a bishop by him soon after his arrival in Britain. Ferrete attempted to found some sort of Eastern Church in England and in September 1866 he published *The Eastern Liturgy adapted for Use in the West* (London). Ferrete also offered to confer Holy Orders upon Anglicans and others who desired them. In 1874 he left England for Switzerland and Seccombe severed his relations with him. Brandreth states that by 1877 Seccombe was again an Anglican.¹¹⁹

Another ecclesiastical venture in which Seccombe was involved was The Order of Corporate Reunion which he is said to have founded together with F.G. Lee and T.W. Mossman. Brandreth gave the founding date as 1877, while others date the founding of the Order in 1874. The Order of Corporate Reunion was established ostensibly in order to provide the Church of England with Orders which Rome would be obliged to recognize as valid. According to Brandreth, Seccombe and his two associates received some sort of episcopal orders by the Summer of 1877, though Seccombe may have received his consecration earlier from Ferrete. Since the activities of the Order were shrouded in the deepest secrecy, the information available is scanty and conjectural. At any rate Seccombe apparently never exercised his episcopal orders and soon left the movement.¹²⁰

F.E. Langhelt, in *A Chapter of Secret History*, stated that the Order was founded in 1874.¹²¹ According to Brandreth, Seccombe soon dropped his ties with the Order even though he had been the prime mover in its founding. Whatever Seccombe's connections were with the Order and with Lee and Mossman, whether he was consecrated after the Order was established or sooner at the hands of Ferrete, in the early part of 1875 he had apparently joined the Orthodox Church and became associated with Overbeck. It seems likely, however, that Seccombe left the Orthodox Church in 1877 and established the Order with Lee and Mossman that Summer, for Seccombe's name does not figure in Overbeck's *Review* after the January-September, 1877 issue. This is all the more strange when one considers that Seccombe's articles and translations appeared rather frequently beginning with 1875.

The first of Seccombe's articles appeared in the first issue of *The Orthodox Catholic Review* for 1875, and was signed with the initials "Dr. J.S."¹²² He wrote in a manner which presupposed that he was not only

¹¹⁶ Brandreth, *Dr. Lee of Lambeth*, p. 120. In Brandreth's opinion Seccombe "was of an excitable temper and took an unusual interest in religious controversy." (Ibid.)

¹¹⁷ *British Medical Journal*, Ibid.

¹¹⁸ On the colorful Ferrete, see: Henry R.T. Brandreth, *Episcopi Vagantes and the Anglican Church* (London, [1947]), Chapter v; Cf. "Julius soi-disant Bishop of Iona," OCR, I, No. 1 (January, 1867). 5-9.

¹¹⁹ Dr. Lee of Lambeth, Ibid.

¹²⁰ Henry R.T. Brandreth, *The Oecumenical Ideals of the Oxford Movement* (London, 1947), pp. 69-70; *Episcopi Vagantes*, pp. 64-65. In the latter work Brandreth said, in one place, that Seccombe participated in a consecration with Lee in 1879 (p. 50), but in another place (p.65) he said it was Mossman instead.

¹²¹ Cited in Brandreth, *The Oecumenical Ideals*, p. 69n.

¹²² "Neologism and Orthodoxy," OCR, IV, No. 1 (January-March, 1875), 21-34.

a member of the Orthodox Church but that he had devoted some time to the study of her tenets. Among other things, he stated that “the Orthodox Church is the only institution on earth which satisfies the reason on religious matters” and that she “alone affords a solution to those momentous questions which the existing religious systems of the West are unable to grapple with.” He invited all his readers to a study of Orthodoxy. The next issue of the *Review* contained his “Articles of Catholic and Orthodox Belief.”¹²³ The same issue (pp. 90-92) contained his “An urgent appeal to Anglo-Catholics” in which he urged them to leave the Church of England and become Orthodox.

In this appeal, Seccombe enumerated the various defects of the Establishment: (1) it was in complete subjection to the secular power; (2) there was absent within it any authoritative standard of doctrine; (3) its administration of the Sacraments were defective and mutilated; and (4) there was enforced communion in it with heretics. Seccombe was of the opinion that such defects were fundamental and “absolutely inconsistent with Catholicity.” As far as Anglican Orders were concerned, he said that the validity of these orders were not recognized by any other Church. “As for the truth of this matter [valid orders], it is needless for me to express my own thoughts, which, after all, can be mere private and individual opinion, of no value or importance.” He was of the opinion that the question of Anglican Orders was a small matter and that if everything else were put right it “would amount to a ritual defect which could easily be remedied, provided it were met and considered in a right spirit.” If the defects he numbered were remedied all hindrances to union with Orthodoxy would be restored as an independent National Church in communion with the Orthodox Church. Such a body would be welcomed into the “Confederation of independent but United Churches which is the legitimate representative of the Undivided Catholic Church, and which glories in the title of Orthodox.”

As for other writings, Seccombe published a booklet in answer to three well-known essays by the philosophical radical John Stuart Mill.¹²⁴ Seccombe’s book dealt primarily with an examination and refutation of Mill’s essay on *Theism*. He also executed the translation from the Greek of “An Accurate Exposition of the Orthodox Faith,” by St. John Damascene. There had been a renewed interest in this eighth century Eastern Church Father since the Bonn Conferences where his writings were quoted from, especially in connection with the *Filioque* discussions. Seccombe’s translation began to appear in *The Orthodox Catholic Review* starting with the January-June, 1876 issue. He dedicated his translation, by permission, to Patriarch Hierotheus of Antioch (1851-85). Appearing in the same issue of the *Review* was Seccombe’s composition of the “Office of the Holy Great Martyr Alban, Protomartyr of Britain.” This office was modeled on ancient patterns in the Menaeon and exhibited considerable knowledge of Byzantine hymnological techniques. At some later time Seccombe published his translation or composition of *The Great Catechism of the Holy, Catholic, Apostolic, and Orthodox Church*. This work received the approval of the Holy Synod of the Church of Greece as well as of the Patriarch of Antioch. Most of Seccombe’s articles were signed by initials: Dr. J.S.; J.S.M.D.; or J.T.S., M.D., however, he signed this translation of the Damascene’s work as John T. Seccombe, M.D., F.R.A.S.

¹²³ IV, No. 2 (April-June, 1875), 84-90. This was later re-printed in pamphlet form and was still advertised for sale in 1895 in Stephen G. Hatherly (ed.), *Office of the Credence and the Divine Liturgy of our Father among the Saints, John Chrysostom, Archbishop of Constantinople* (London, [1895]), p. ii., along with Seccombe’s *The Great Catechism* (see below).

¹²⁴ *Science, Theism and Revelation considered in relation to Mr. Mill’s Essay on Nature, Religion and Atheism* (London, 1875), pp. 80. A review of this from *The Lynn Advertiser, and Norfolk and Cambridgeshire Herald* (23 October 1875) was reprinted in the OCR, V, No. 3 (July-September, 1876), 195-200.

G.V. Shann

A collaborator of Overbeck who distinguished himself by his numerous translations of Orthodox services into English was George V. Shann. He was not a “schooled theologian, but a simple Orthodox layman, whose professional duties lie in a different direction.”¹²⁵ Shann, a convert himself, was instrumental in bringing other “truth-seeking souls” into the Church. Some of his fellow Englishmen thought him an “alien” for his profession of Orthodoxy. He called upon his friends to be missionaries and he hoped for large gains in England. For the small group of English Orthodox in Kidderminster (Worcestershire), where the famous seventeenth century Puritan Richard Baxter had preached, Shann opened an Orthodox Oratory in a room at No. 9 Church Street, formerly used as a solicitor’s office. This was opened for Orthodox prayers on Sunday, 6 February 1876, and was still being used at Christmas 1879.¹²⁶ The small congregation of ten adults and three children gathered every Saturday evening and Sunday morning, and the eves of Great Feasts, for such devotions as laymen could recite and, no doubt, using translations made by Shann himself. In one of his “Addresses to the Western Orthodox,” Overbeck said he was thinking of his “dear friends” from Kidderminster praying in their Oratory. They, too, were apparently hoping for the success of the Western Orthodox scheme.¹²⁷

Although Shann may have been interested in Overbeck’s Western Orthodox scheme, he found it expedient, at the same time, not to neglect Eastern liturgical usages. In his leisure time he learned Greek and Slavonic in order to read the Church offices in the original tongues and to translate them for his English co-religionists. Shann’s metrical as well as prose translations of Greek liturgical offices began to appear in Overbeck’s *Review* in 1875 and it may be presumed that he became Orthodox around that time. His translations continued to appear regularly from that time until the second from the last issue: Vol. XI (Part II, 1888). Besides his own work, Shann edited and supplemented several translations made from the Slavonic by Fr. Basil Popoff. Shann had some contact with S.G. Hatherly and furnished the latter with some translations for his *Office for the Lord’s Day*.¹²⁸ Later, Hatherly rather sharply criticized Shann’s *Euchology*.¹²⁹

Besides the mass of translations which appeared in *The Orthodox Catholic Review* over a period of years, Shann also published a laymen’s prayer book,¹³⁰ a volume containing the Sacraments and other offices,¹³¹ and other works.¹³²

E. Harrison

Eugene Harrison was apparently a late-comer into Overbeck’s fold. With an M.A. from Oxford University, Harrison knew Russian and translated from it an “Exposition of the Divine Liturgy of St. John

¹²⁵ OCR, VII (Part II, 1878), 159; Cf. G.V. Shann, “Why I am an Orthodox,” *Ibid.*, IX (Part II, 1881), 260-274.

¹²⁶ “Extracts from an Address delivered by Mr. G.V. Shann, at a meeting held in the Orthodox Oratory, Kidderminster, September 11/23, 1876,” OCR, VIII (1879), 36, 38-9.

¹²⁷ OCR, IX (Part I, 1880), 81.

¹²⁸ See p. viii of the preface of Hatherly’s book.

¹²⁹ “Translated Greek Office-Books,” 139-40.

¹³⁰ *Euchology: A Manual of Prayers of the Holy Orthodox Church* (Kidderminster, 1891), pp. xxi+524.

¹³¹ *Book of Needs of the Holy Orthodox Church with an Appendix containing Offices for the Laying on of Hands* (London, 1894), pp. xxxix/260/28. This was translated from a Slavonic *Trebnik* of 1882 and a *Chinovnik* of 1890.

¹³² *Synopsis: Part I. The All-Night Vigil, and First, Third, and Sixth Hour Offices* (n.p., [1878?]).

Chrysostom.”¹³³ Nothing more is known of Harrison except that almost a quarter of a century later his name appeared as translator from Russian of a statement which spoke out against the possibility of any kind of union between the Established Church and the Orthodox Church.¹³⁴

J.N.W.B. Robertson

One who was associated with Overbeck toward the end of his career was J.N.W.B. Robertson, who assisted in editing a new edition in English of Peter Moghila’s Confession. This took up the entire last issue of *The Orthodox Catholic Review* (Vol. XII). The *Orthodox Confession of the Eastern Church* was again reprinted later (London, 1898). It is interesting to note that many of the converts to the Orthodox Church in the nineteenth century were interested in liturgiology.¹³⁵ Robertson was no exception. He, too, published several translations from the Greek, particularly of the Liturgies.¹³⁶

Other Associates of Overbeck

Another of Overbeck’s followers was one who preferred to hide behind the anonymity of his initials: “R.H.H.” He translated several portions of Overbeck’s book *Der einzige sichere Ausweg* and wrote “The new ‘ism’ in the Established Church,”¹³⁷ in which he discussed a certain Anglican cleric who preached “Irvingism” to the consternation of his flock. R.H.H. told the Anglican laity that the only recourse they had was to seek refuge in the Catholic Orthodox Church. The writer predicted that conditions as they then were in the Church could not last for long, for the “Ceremonial Protestants,” *i.e.*, the Ritualists, would be forced to join Papal Rome or “unite themselves with Christ’s Holy Orthodox Catholic Church.”

Another Englishman who was a member of the “Greek Orthodox Church” was Theodore F. Shann. Probably related to G.V. Shann, his address “On Transubstantiation” delivered at a meeting in Wolverhampton in November 1875 was reproduced in *The Orthodox Catholic Review*.¹³⁸ He also translated from the French, “The Russian and Greek Churches: The Manner of their Reception of Converts,” which was written by A.N. Mouravieff (Murav’ev). The latter stressed that the difference in the practice of the two Churches was simply a matter of rite rather than dogma.¹³⁹

Another convert mentioned by Overbeck, but one who probably was not associated with him, was a Mr. Matthias Jenkyns, “whose zeal for the Church of his adoption, and for Orthodox studies generally, is well known to us.”¹⁴⁰ Jenkyns wrote the introduction to a book of *Greek Lays, Idylls, Legends, etc.*, translated by E.M. Edmonds.

¹³³ OCR, X (1883), 84-122.

¹³⁴ Laicus Orthodoxus, “Remarks on a proposed concordat between the Anglo-American and the Orthodox Church,” *Russian Orthodox American Messenger*, November & December supplement, 1907, pp. 287-294. Translated by E. Harrison.

¹³⁵ *The divine and sacred Liturgies of our fathers among the Saints John Chrysostom and Basil the Great*, Edited, with an English translation, by J.N.W.B. Robertson (London, 1886), pp. 223. This contained both Greek and English texts. The book was re-issued in enlarged form a few years later: *The Divine Liturgies... with that of the Presanctified preceded by the Hesperinos and the Orthros*, Edited with the Greek text by J.N.W.B. Robertson (London, 1894).

¹³⁶ “Translated Greek Office-Books,” 137.

¹³⁷ OCR, IV, No. 2 (April-June, 1875), 137-40.

¹³⁸ IV, No. 4 (October-December, 1875), 276-87.

¹³⁹ This was translated from Murav’ev’s, *Question Religieuse d’Orient et d’Occident* (St. Petersburg, 1858), and appeared in the OCR, V (1876), 209-16, 271-75.

¹⁴⁰ OCR, XI (Part I, 1885), 104.

OVERBECK'S WRITINGS

THE *Orthodox Catholic Review*, edited by Dr. Overbeck, was the first English language periodical published in the interests of the Orthodox Church,¹⁴¹ and in the nineteenth century there was only one other Orthodox journal issued in Western Europe before it.¹⁴² Overbeck explained the purpose of his journal in the first issue:

There is no English Periodical consecrated to the defense and the furtherance of Catholic Orthodoxy; and since even the smallest sects possess their organ or organs to propagate their tenets, the oldest and most respectable Catholic Church must suffer herself to be abused and vilified by grossest ignorance and shameful malevolence. Seventy millions of Orthodox Christians are spoken of as *the crème of Superstition*, as *the blindfolded tools of Priestcraft*, - in short, as all but Pagans bearing the Christian name. It is high time that in the nineteenth century, which boasts of its deep learning, its impartial judgment, and its true Christianity, these clouds of wrong notions should be dispelled... Our Review intends setting forth the Truth of Catholic Orthodoxy as opposed to Popery and Protestantism, clearing its way through the heap of rubbish stored up by both parties for centuries past. It intends paving the way to the Restoration of the *Western Orthodox Catholic Church*, and thereby promoting the great end of the Union of Christendom. It intends showing the inner life of Orthodoxy, and the progress and learning within its body.¹⁴³

From the first appearance of the *Review* Overbeck propagated his views on the restoration of the Western Orthodox Church and it was soon the Anglican journals took note of his work “sneeringly and flippantly, sometimes maliciously, but always betraying their utter ignorance of the matter.”¹⁴⁴ According to Overbeck the leading English Church papers showed the greatest lack of charity and ignorance. Some of the attacks against him were libelous but Overbeck chose to ignore them rather than prosecute by law.

Overbeck disregarded most of the personal attacks upon himself and upon the OCR, but not so attacks upon Orthodoxy as a whole. When *The Spectator* in its issues of 6, 13, and 20 July 1867 attacked the Russian clergy in reference to his writings, Overbeck wrote three letters in refutation. The first was accepted and published, the second was refused, while he did not bother to submit the third. All three were printed in the OCR, making a strong defense for the Orthodox Church.¹⁴⁵

“N.O.” wrote that when the OCR first appeared it made a strong impression in England.

His accusatory articles against the pretensions of Ultramontanism and against the Latitudinarianism of the Anglicans revealed his strict philosophical, unmercifully critical mind in all its might, but his very implacability and sharpness immediately repulsed from his journal possible readers for whom the publication was intended.¹⁴⁶

The journal appeared more or less on schedule the first few years and was entirely edited by Dr. Overbeck. Throughout its life-span (the last issue appeared in 1891) of rather sporadic appearance, especially toward the end, the OCR contained a mass of interesting material. Besides its articles of a polemical nature, it published accounts of the affairs of the Orthodox Church, stressed the Russian Church's missionary work, gave much matter concerning the question of “reunion,” and as has been seen, afforded a space for the publication of writings of other Orthodox writers. The *Review* was important also for its publication of many valu-

¹⁴¹ The second such periodical was *The Oriental Church Magazine* edited in New York City from 1878 to 1881 by the Rev. Nicholas Bjerring.

¹⁴² This was *L'Union Chrétienne*, a weekly founded in Paris in 1859 by Fr. Joseph V. Vasil'ev and published with the aid of Abbé Guettée and S.P. Sushkov. In 1868 Fr. Guettée became the editor and published the journal until his death in 1892.

¹⁴³ OCR, I, No. 1 (January, 1867), 1-2. Italics are Overbeck's.

¹⁴⁴ OCR, III, No. 1-6 (January-June, 1871), 46.

¹⁴⁵ OCR, I, No. 6-9 (June-September, 1867), 149-61.

¹⁴⁶ “Korrespondentsia iz Londona,” col. 1586.

able translations of Orthodox theological and liturgical documents – the latter primarily for the benefit and edification of the English Orthodox. Some of the translations which appeared have already been mentioned. Among these was Overbeck's translation of Nicholas M. Damala's book: *On the Relation of the Anglican Church to the Orthodox*, an analysis of the doctrinal content of the Thirty-nine Articles. The last issue of the OCR was a re-issue of Peter Moghila's Catechism which had originally been translated into English by the Orthodox convert Philip Lodvel and published in 1772. Almost the entire burden of the issuance of the magazine rested on Overbeck's shoulders and his other avocations detracted from the time involved in putting a journal to press. This, and perhaps the lack of funds as well, explained the sporadic appearance of the OCR.

Through his *Review* Overbeck had some contacts with Fr. Nicholas Bjerring (1831-1900). A convert from the Roman Church and rector of the first Orthodox church in New York City, in 1875 Bjerring sent Overbeck some books he had published in translation and he asked Overbeck to reprint his translation of the office for the reception of converts in the OCR. Although published in 1872, only a few copies of it remained in print.¹⁴⁷ Overbeck also reprinted two other of Bjerring's translations in later issues. When Bjerring's *Oriental Church Magazine* appeared, Overbeck found it "colorless, entertaining, strictly abstaining from unsettling Romans, Anglicans, and other Protestants, by telling them that they are wrong, that they must leave their errors and turn to the Orthodox truth." He urged Bjerring not to listen to Protestant counsels but to take a stand against heterodoxy, in which case he would support him.¹⁴⁸ It should be noted that Bjerring eventually returned to the Roman Church by way of Presbyterianism.¹⁴⁹

Another Orthodox journalist with whom Overbeck had contacts was Fr. Vladimir René François Guettée (1816-92). A former Jesuit, Guettée joined the Russian Orthodox Church in 1861 and became an indefatigable exponent of Orthodoxy. Together with Fr. J.V. Vasil'ev he engaged in polemics against the Roman Catholics. Overbeck corresponded with Guettée and thought highly of him, though he disagreed with the latter's making a distinction between Anglicans and Protestants in his *Exposition de la Doctrine de l'Église Catholique Orthodoxe* (Paris, 1866).¹⁵⁰ An extract from this book appeared in the OCR.¹⁵¹

Aside from occasional letters to various periodicals, Overbeck confined his writing, for the most part, to his own OCR and his books. Shortly after the Bonn Conferences his friends convinced him to write an article for general Protestant consumption and place it in a magazine read by them. The general Protestant public of the Low Church or Dissenting stamp had little notion of the Old Catholic movement and no knowledge of his scheme. His article on "The Reunion Scheme of the Bonn Conferences" appeared in *The Inquirer*, a weekly with extensive circulation in America as well as England, in its 25 May and 1 June 1878 issues. Endeavoring to procure copies of this magazine a few weeks after publication, Overbeck found that exactly these two issues were out of print. He then reproduced the essay in the OCR, changing the original title.¹⁵² The article explained the failure of the Bonn Conferences from the Orthodox point of view, discussed the impossibility of union, especially with Anglicans, and aired his scheme for the restoration of the ancient Western Church.

¹⁴⁷ OCR, IV, No. 2 (April-June, 1875), 98-109, 140-41.

¹⁴⁸ OCR, VII (Part II, 1878), 154-55.

¹⁴⁹ For some of Bjerring's career see, D.F. Abramtsov, "Father Nicholas Bjerring: His Work in Orthodoxy," *The Russian Orthodox Journal*, XIX, No. 12 (April, 1946), 5-6, 19.

¹⁵⁰ This was translated into other languages including Russian (St. Petersburg, 1869) and English (New York, 1867).

¹⁵¹ "Upon what is Your Faith Grounded?" OCR, IX (Part I, 1880), 90-96. In the book this is called "Rule of Faith." For biographical details on Guettée see his *Souvenirs d'un pretre romaine devenu orthodoxe* (Paris, 1889).

¹⁵² "Orthodoxy, Old Catholicism, and Anglicanism," OCR, VII (Part I, 1878), 17-37.

Overbeck was an erudite person, a product of German scholarship, and possessed a doctorate in philosophy and divinity. He knew Latin, German, French, Italian, and English, as well as Greek, Armenian, Syriac, and Hebrew, and, as has been seen above, many other languages besides. He said in one place that he studied Eastern languages with H. Peterman the German Orientalist.¹⁵³ Among his scholarly works was an edition of St. Ephraim the Syrian for the Oxford University Press.¹⁵⁴ Aside from an occasional philological excursus, Overbeck seems to have utilized his knowledge of Eastern languages very little, and translated only several short passages from Syriac and Armenian in the OCR.¹⁵⁵ He was forced to leave scholarly work to others because the leisure hours left from his other avocations were so few that he could barely “cast a transitory glance” into the books he loved.¹⁵⁶ His knowledge of Eastern languages led him to an interest in the ancient separated Churches of the East. In 1852 and 1853 he visited the Mechitarist settlements in San Lazaro, near Venice, and elsewhere and found these Armenian Uniates to be primarily Armenians and only secondarily Romans. A study of the theology of the Armenian Gregorians convinced him that they were orthodox in doctrine and he hoped they would enter into formal communion with the Orthodox Church. In his opinion the Patriarchal See of Antioch should have been ceded to the Armenian Catholicos as proposed by the Byzantine Emperor Manuel in 1179.¹⁵⁷

Overbeck’s writings dealing with the establishment of the Western Orthodox Catholic Church were, in the main, propagandistic and polemistic and, after the appearance of the first books in Russia, he acquired the reputation of a publicist rather than a serious scholar.¹⁵⁸ Some thought that his writing exhibited the influence of his earlier Latin training and that he sometimes used theological expressions and thoughts which were not altogether accurate or acceptable from the Orthodox point of view.¹⁵⁹

Most of Overbeck’s books were in German and English, but the majority of them appeared in Russian translation, in separate editions or serially in *Kristianskoe Chtenie* (Christian Reading) and in *Chtenija Obshchestva Ljubitelej Dukhovnago Prosveshchenija* (Readings of the Society of Friends of Spiritual Enlightenment).¹⁶⁰ His first book dealing with Orthodoxy and the Western confessions, *Die orthodoxe katholische Anschauung* (Halle, a/S., 1865), created a sensation in Russia where it appeared serially in the journals *Pravoslavnoe Obozrenie* (Orthodox Review) and *Dukhovnaja Beseda* (Spiritual Conversation), as well as the newspaper *Syn Otechestvo* (Son of the Fatherland) in 1865. It had two different Russian translators and appeared in two book editions. His book *Die providentielle Stellung des Orthodoxen Russland* (Halle a/S., 1869) also had two different translators: Fr. Eugene E. Popoff and Archpriest Vladimir Ladinskyj of Weimar. At least one of his books appeared in Russian in serial form some months before it was published in German in book form: *Die Rechtgläubige Kirche* (Halle a/S., 1869). In this case, as in most of the others, Overbeck’s translator was Fr. E.I. Popoff.

Overbeck’s first English book was *Catholic Orthodoxy and Anglo-Catholicism* (London, 1866). This

¹⁵³ OCR, II, No. 1-12 (January-December, 1886), 148.

¹⁵⁴ *S. Ephraemi Syri, Rabulae Episcopi Edesseni, Balaei, aliorumque opera selecta e codicibus Syriacis MSS.* In Musaeo Britannico et Bibliotheca Bodleiana asservatis primus edidit Dr. J.J. Overbeck (Oxoni: e Typographeo Clarendoniano, 1865).

¹⁵⁵ II, No. 1-12 (January-December, 1868), 139-48.

¹⁵⁶ OCR, VII (Part II, 1878), 169.

¹⁵⁷ “A Parallel between the Armenian, Syrian, Coptic, and Abyssinian Churches,” OCR, XI (Part I, 1885), 86-87.

¹⁵⁸ *Kristianskoe Chtenie*, 1867, I, 288.

¹⁵⁹ *Pravoslavnoe Obozrenie*, 1870, II, 397.

¹⁶⁰ See bibliographical notice in Brokgauz and Efron, *Entsiklopedicheskij Slovar’* (St. Petersburg, 1897), Tome XXI, p. 655.

work, which stunned the Anglican world, stated his case against the possibility of intercommunion between the Orthodox Church and the Church of England. His scheme for the restoration of the ancient ante-schismatic Catholic Church was first put forth in English in this book. With “No Popery! No Protestantism!” his slogan, he delved into an exposition of the errors of Protestantism and Roman Catholicism in comparison with the doctrines of the Orthodox Church. At the conclusion of the book his “Outlines of the Constitution of the Orthodox Catholic Church of the West” appeared.¹⁶¹

Overbeck’s last book of a polemical-apologetic nature was *A Plain View of the Claims of the Orthodox Catholic Church* (London, 1881). This first appeared in the OCR,¹⁶² as was the case with most of his other, shorter, works in English. The following year it appeared in *Khristianskoe Chtenie* in Russian, and in *Alytheia*, the official organ of the Patriarchate of Constantinople, in Greek translation. This book, perhaps exhibiting Overbeck’s erudition at its best, devoted considerable space to a refutation of Roman Catholic novelties, changes, and abuses in ecclesiastical discipline and the sacraments, basing its arguments on original sources.

¹⁶¹ See Appendix A.

¹⁶² IX (Part II, 1881), 123-260.

APPENDIX A

OUTLINES OF THE CONSTITUTION OF THE ORTHODOX CATHOLIC CHURCH OF THE WEST¹⁶³

I. The Orthodox Catholic Church of the West being *essentially* the same as that of the East, both must profess *the same Faith*. Our Creed is therefore to be found in Peter Moghila's "Orthodox Confession of Faith of the Catholic and Apostolic Church," or in the Larger Catechism of the Russian Church (translated by Mr. Blackmore).

II. The East and the West must likewise have the same fundamental Church-Constitution. Therefore the Western Church accepts the Holy Canons of the seven oecumenical councils. For further information see "Die orthod. kath. Anschauung," p. 115-126; and "Po voprossu o soyedinenii tserkvey" (On the Question of the Reunion of Churches), St. Petersburg, 1866, p. 8 *seq.* The Russian author comprises my overtures in 16 items.

It would be a vain attempt to establish the Orthodox Church of the West, *Proprio Marte*, as an autokephalous Church. This would but be one more Schism. The first requisite of Western Orthodoxy is a *correct course in founding its Church*. Those who agree with the principles laid down in this book (the shortest expression of which is contained in the two points just exhibited) should commune with each other, and thus form a body of *petitioners* who would address themselves to "*the most Holy Governing Synod*" of the Russian Church in order to be, on the said basis, admitted into the Communion with that branch of the Orthodox Church, since that branch is nearer and more congenial to the West than any other branch of the Eastern Church. Up to our formal reception into the Orthodox Church no administration of sacraments could take place, but we were only to join for private devotions, like catechumens, and in case of urgency, to apply to an Eastern Orthodox priest. As it will take a long time to settle all *minor details* of the question, our reception may not be deferred to such a moment, and it *cannot* be deferred by the Authorities of the Orthodox Church, if we pledge ourselves *not to retain or introduce anything Western which the Holy Governing Synod does not approve of*.

Thus the first thing of the Synod would be to license a Western priest validly ordained and conforming to Orthodoxy 1. to celebrate the Liturgy as found in the *Missale Romanum* (without the *Elevation* after the words of the Institution), of course the Masses of modern saints excluded; 2. to confess the faithful; to administer the Holy Communion *under both kinds*; to baptize by *trine immersion*; to solemnize the sacrament of matrimony; and to dispense the sacrament of the Unction of the sick (not to be limited to the hopeless state of the dying). For the celebration of the Liturgy the Synod would supply an Antiminsion. The Liturgy and the other services would be held in the vernacular tongue, but the official language used in documents, Councils of the Western Church, &c., would remain the Latin. The sacerdotal garments (now partly curtailed and disfigured) to be restored to their primitive Western shape and simplicity. No opera-music, but the dignified Gregorian chant. Only icons to be used in Church. The *Horae canonicae* to be purified from Romish stain; and to be said in full length by the Regular Clergy (Monks), but "ritu paschali" by the Secular clergy.

The *indispensible* arrangements and regulations to be made by the Russian Church before founding the Orthodox Western Church, can therefore be greatly simplified by the clause "*salve Sanctae Synodi approbatione*," binding the Westerns in their proceedings.

¹⁶³ J.J. Overbeck, *Catholic Orthodoxy and Anglo-Catholicism: A Word about Intercommunion between the English and Orthodox Churches* (London, 1866), pp. 198-200. Italics and other peculiarities are Overbeck's.

APPENDIX B

PETITION TO THE MOST HOLY GOVERNING SYNOD OF THE RUSSIAN SYNOD¹⁶⁴

The undersigned most humbly beg to lay before the Holy Governing Synod the following urgent request and petition: –

Having come to the firm conviction that the pure faith and legitimate Church constitution have only been preserved by the Eastern branch of the Catholic Church, while the Western branch, yielding to doctrinal innovations and anti-canonical abuses, has fallen into heresy and schism, we feel the necessity of suing for communion with the Eastern Church which had continued undefiled and truly Catholic from the beginning.

We receive all the dogmas and holy canons taught and prescribed by the seven Oecumenical Synods, as the Eastern Church receives them, rejecting at the same time not only the doctrine of Papal supremacy, but also all the Papal changes in the Catholic faith and Church constitution contrary to the continuity and perpetuity of Catholic Orthodoxy.

However, though the actual Western Church is not the genuine Catholic Church, but is disfigured by fatal innovations and gross abuses, there was a time when the East and West, both Orthodox alike in faith and Church constitution, constituted the great Catholic Church, and recognized each other as the two living branches of the one tree of life.

Both Churches professed the same faith and Church constitution. This was the divine bond of unity. But both Churches, equally, watched jealously their peculiarities as traditions from time immemorial, *i.e.*, introduced by the Apostolic founders of their Churches. How intense and legitimate this jealousy was, we see *e.g.* from the Paschal questions, which kept the Church for a time in a state of great excitement, but did not break the bond of unity.

Thus, unity not being uniformity, we appeal to the holy Eastern Church to admit us into Church communion without demanding our conformation to the Eastern Rite, but rather to assist us to build again the Orthodox Western Church, to give us priests who will celebrate the Western liturgy and administer the sacraments according to the Western Rite. If the Holy Governing Synod accedes to our request, we will hasten to lay before them our venerable Western liturgy, and the other Church formularies, for examination and approbation.

We are Westerns, and must remain Westerns; yes, God's Providence framed the true Western Church (which the Holy Governing Synod is called upon to restore by brotherly assistance and co-operation) on the Western mind, and by so doing showed that it is not desirable to be transplanted into a heterogeneous soil. We belong to the Church of Ss. Cyprian, Ambrose, Augustine, Jerome, Leo, Gregory the Great, and are as proud of them as our Eastern sister is proud of and faithful to Ss. Athanasius, the Cyrils, Basil, Chrysostom, the Gregories, etc. We recognize the excellence of the Eastern liturgies and other Church formularies, as we appreciate the excellence of our own, well knowing that each is the best in its own sphere. We do not wish to intrude our liturgy, formularies, and rite on the sister Church of the East, – it would be strange to their character and frame of mind, because it has not grown up in the soil of their Church. The same we ask in return from our beloved sister Church.

If we are bidden simply to join the Eastern Church and renounce our Western claims, we must plead

¹⁶⁴ OCR, I, No. 6-9 (June-September, 1867), 192-193.

an inalienable right to remain Westerns, we must plead the duty or rather the honour of the Eastern Church in reinstating her legitimate sister Church in all her rights forfeited since more than eight centuries by the Papal aggression.

The momentous question raised by the present Petition is not the gain of a few members of the Eastern Church, but the re-establishment of the Western Orthodox Catholic Church. This Church must grow from small beginnings, from single individuals. But as soon as the establishment of our Western Orthodox Church, by authority of the Eastern Church, is accomplished, a considerable number of Roman Catholics, presently dissatisfied, and groaning under the Papal yoke, but not knowing whither to turn, will undoubtedly flock to their own regenerated Church.

The reunion of the East and the West, comprising the whole of both Churches, is an absolute impossibility, since the Western Church adopted as a binding dogma the Pope's supremacy and divine vicarship of Christ, which the Eastern Church justly condemns as a heresy.

Thus all the attempts at reunion originating from the Roman Church were sure to fail; for if she gave up her dogma of the Pope's supremacy, she would proclaim her apostasy from the infallible Church, - her heresy, in short, her non-existence as a Catholic Church. There is, consequently, no other way how to attain the most desirable end of reunion that to drive a wedge into the Roman Church by the establishment of a Western Uniate Church which is in communion with the Eastern Church.

Our Saviour, praying for the unity of His Church, prays also for us who wish sincerely to be admitted into the Holy Catholic Church. Yet not only we, but numbers of Catholic-minded Westerns, who do not know our proceedings, virtually beseech the Holy Governing Synod to fulfill their wish and see the Western Church once more restored to truth, holiness, and Catholic Orthodoxy.

Amen.

Reading, 24/12 March, 1867.

[N.B. Persons willing to sign the above Petition may apply at the Publishing Office of the "Orthodox Catholic Review" (60, Paternoster Row), where their names will be received. Persons not residing in town, or absent from town, may address themselves to the Editor of the "Orthodox Catholic Review," who will have their names inserted, and their letters appended to authenticate the signature. The signers are requested to add their professions and addresses.]

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