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To Mr St W Pontis

Weston S. Ill
Feb 21/87

Dear Sir I do not remember that Mr J. N. Darby had any definite place in Oxford for his temporary habitation. When you ask my general opinion of Mr Darby's career, I doubt whether in my position (which may seem hostile) I ought to say any thing to the public. At the same time, facts speak for themselves.

Seriously, when I review the past before the Supreme Tribunal, I thank God for Mr Darby's harsh and wholly unexpected treatment of me. It was a shock that broke up my previous confidence. It made me doubt how others, to whom I had looked up or on whom I had leaned, would behave to me. It forced me to ask: Do I after all know rightly what Christianity is? It drove me into deeper and more leisurely inquiry; though never did I relax my earliest conviction that moral truth, and was not just sentiment, were the sacred core of any worthy religion, - not theory or creed, wise or unwise.

Mr Darby soon finished off with me: I saw with wonder his renunciation of the principles which had so won upon me, and I was able to keep quite ^{out} of his way. But in due time he fell foul of my old College friend Benjamin Newton, accusing him of "Irving's

heresy"; i.e. that in expounding the confessions in
the Psalms called Meppianic, he (like Ixving) seemed to
ascribe actual sin to the immaculate Jesus. — From my
present point of view I find it easy to believe that Newton
was open to just attack on his own platform & that Newton
frankly disowned the imputations. In spite of this, son
Darby not only split up his own brotherhood into two
sections with impenetrable walls, but excommunicated Coak
and Müller (reverend Baptist Ministers in Bristol) and
all who frequented their ministry, barely because they had
"received" Ladies who came from Newton, — and declined
to enter the controversy.

Darby fought this battle for long years. My wife was a
warm admirer of George Müller (of Bristol) and her sister was
married to my old friend Dr. Coak, a supporter of Darby
against Newton. In consequence when my wife went to
visit her sister (most affectionate as they were) my wife
was kept out of the Darby Eucharist, and treated as an
outsider. The late Lord Compton (my old friend of our
Eastern journey, & of old called John Parnell) tried to
avoid the cross attack of Newton and of Darby, but with
the sole result of making "3 Lords' Tables" instead of
two; strange demonstration of Christian Union.

Mr Darby was suddenly ^{accused} attacked from within his own
body of Newton's heresy. One of them sent me ample

papers, with Darcy's own confession and retraction, yet
[as if saying, Egomet mi' agnosco] they did not soften
him towards Newton, but drove out some of his own friends
with disgust. I have found Darcy's section every where
called "the Exclusive Section"; justly, I suppose: though
each in turn is exclusive.

My last painful experience of Darcy was in his conduct
^{to} ~~his~~ his faithful, too loving, too admiring friend Dr. Cronin
who had gone all lengths of exclusiveness under his influence
and duly tutored his own children to it, as far as he
could. One daughter was married to a Swede, who died
early, leaving a family of 5 young children, in very low
pecuniary straits. Cronin, visiting the Isle of Wight
fell ⁱⁿ with a question dividing some of Darcy's connections
and took a decisive part on one side. Darcy, on learning
it, flatly took the opposite. What success was in detail
he pursued, no one cared to tell me, ^{nor could} ~~but~~ I ~~the~~ inquire:
but the hostility was so awful, that Cronin's daughter
regarded her father as excommunicated & pronounced
unclean, in so much that in her deep poverty she refused her
father's money, and renounced him with such harshness as
viciously ~~to~~ broke her mother's heart. Her mother at once
was seized with a headache that never left her, in short,
she desisted, languished and died: the father never lost
the pang of heart, nor walked from his wife's lips, and followed
her to the grave, not instantly, but without ever recovering

from the moral shack.

At Oxford an elder Evangelical whom I much
in 1829?
respected, to whom I tried to commend J. A. Darby,
said to me briefly: "He has a peculiar power, but he
"stirs up unprofitable questions which cannot lead to unity."
I was not at all of the good man's opinion, then: but
looking back some 58 years I see the career of J. A. Darby
to have been chiefly "a ministering of strife."

Charles Breton, who soon after became Sir Charles,
was loved by me when I was an undergraduate, and was
warmly admired when I heard his soul stirring preaching
in Bath some years later. Unhappily he took Holy Orders
in the Church of England so young, that in a very few years
he had to come out; against the remonstrances of his
Academic superiors. It is work for an angel, rather
than for an arrogant young man, conscious of spiritual
power, ^{so} to conduct himself towards Elders and Teachers, as
not to seem proud and presumptuous in breaking away
from their ^{secret} routine. My brother-in-law Rev. Th. Mozley
seems to me to have imbibed from them (Orwell (Cilles) all
the worst and meanest view that could be taken of young
Sir Charles, whom I remember with earnest sympathy
though I have long left his creed behind me.

Yours truly
J. W. Newman