

**The hearts and minds of
J.N.Darby and E.B.Pusey -
a comparative study**

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Introducing the subjects

John Nelson Darby and Edward Bourverie Pusey lived and died in the same years: 1800 and 1882. They were key figures in the emergence and growth of the Brethren movement (Darby), and the Oxford (Tractarian) movement (Pusey), which occurred around 1828 and 1833 respectively, and were active within these movements until their deaths. Both came from aristocratic and privileged backgrounds. Both lived simply, regarding the poor. Both were scholars of the highest order, and distinguished theologians, adept in Hebrew and Greek, yet concerned with many practical issues, in and outside their movements.

Pusey could hardly be regarded as an ‘Evangelical’, given his fervent Anglo-Catholicism, and as for Darby moderate Evangelicals may have considered certain of his views extreme. Nevertheless, both men exhibited the main Evangelical qualitiesⁱ, and it was these that governed their hearts and minds, to an extent hardly surpassed. Both men believed that lives needed to be changed through a personal commitment to Christ (conversionism), were dedicated in their efforts to make this so (activism), sought to understand and be subject to all the tenets of Holy Scripture (biblicism), and attached considerable importance to the death of Christ on the cross (crucicentrism).ⁱⁱ

Turner introduces his biography of Darby: *both (Darby and Pusey) became clergymen in the Established Church, and lived lives of unworldly piety; labouring, although in a wholly different way, to realise a great ideal (the visible unity of the Church of God).*ⁱⁱⁱ These two, seemingly so far apart theologically, had much in common, not least their devotion to Christ and His Church, and opposition to the forces of rationalism and unbelief. They both had the ability to

influence and inspire, despite personal eccentricities. Despite their formidable presence and uncompromising beliefs, they would often demonstrate kindness to those around. Both exhibited considerable independence of mind and originality of thought, and were subjected to fierce opposition and revilement throughout their lifetimes.

Availability of resources

Much has been written about Darby and Pusey, in their own rights and when discussing the Brethren and Oxford movements. Both wrote prolifically. It would be impossible to survey more than a small portion of the available material. Concerning Darby's writings, these can be somewhat tortuous, mystical and difficult to follow, (although communicating well enough with simple folk). Pusey's style too could be complex, though full of meticulous detail and academic rigour. Both preached extensively, and accounts are available of many of their sermons. Both were prolific letter writers, right up to their deaths.

Darby also wrote several hymns, and translated the Bible into French and German, as well as English, something Pusey had once wanted to do, but he had later abandoned the project. Pusey was Regius Oxford Professor of Hebrew (1828-1880) and participated in the academic and administrative life of the University. He was a recognised public figure and involved in public debate. Commentary on these events can be found in newspapers and journals of the time. Darby was loath to get involved in public affairs. Both Darby and Pusey had an impact way beyond British shores. Both had a keen interest in mission, home and overseas. Darby was instrumental in bringing into being some 1500 new Brethren Assemblies in his lifetime^{iv}. Pusey did much to encourage expansion of the Church in new city parishes and overseas.

The writer, R.L.Stevenson, recounts how he met a peasant in a remote French Department in 1878 who asked him: *connaissez-vous le Seigneur?* It transpired that the old man was a member of a Darbyite assembly, one of the many Darby had helped to establish when living among and preaching to the people many years earlier. In the same account Stevenson describes his meeting with a Trappist monk who prayed daily for Pusey's conversion, claiming that Pusey *was very near the truth, and he will reach it yet.*^v

William Kelly (Darby's heir apparent) collected, organised and made available much of Darby's writing, although much of this is undated and void of contextual and biographical detail (other than what is implicit in the writings). Kelly's aim was to disseminate Darby's teaching for the purpose of spiritual edification. What Kelly was to Darby, so Henry Liddon was to Pusey. Liddon's four volumes: *Life of Pusey*, published between 1893 and 1897, is *monumental* in the intrinsic detail given of Pusey's life and work. Perry Butler affirms that he wrote as *a warm admirer and rigid adherent to his master and looked at Pusey solely in terms of the Oxford movement.*^{vi} Much of Pusey's writing referred to in Liddon's volumes^{vii} has been preserved.

Finally, account needs to be taken that their views did not remain static. Darby had rejected his High Church views prior to adopting the system that bears his name, and Pusey had adopted a more liberal stance before becoming a Tractarian. It is likely that Darby became more *separatist* and Pusey more *sacramentalist* from then on.

Issues and concerns

In recent years additional research has been made on Darby and Pusey^{viii}, throwing new light on the subjects, and evidence of the

present interest in what these men stood for and that there is more to be discovered. The purpose of this study is to provide a brief insight into what they felt (in their hearts) and believed (in their minds), about issues that continue to concern people. An added challenge is to do so by way of comparison, given the two moved in different circles, had different interests and vocations, and believed and acted differently. Consideration will be given to their relationship to the prevailing moods and influences, in particular Evangelicalism.

This study will address three main areas only. Still, the scope is enormous, and inevitably there will be a ruthless selection from and omission of material, resulting in a degree of superficiality:

1. Their beliefs concerning the Church, in particular how the visible unity of the Church of Christ can be achieved.
2. Their defence of the Christian Faith against those, such as the writers of *Essays and Reviews*, who challenged orthodox notions.
3. The type of men they were, in particular considering their spirituality and attitudes toward the poor.

Finding common ground between Darby and Pusey

In seeking to find common ground between the two men, we must not neglect the fact that Darby was fiercely opposed to Puseyism, which he perceived to be a false system of doctrine. Of the ninety-seven references I found in Darby's writings to Pusey and Puseyism, most were critical. For example he writes: *His (Satan's) temptations are ever there ... errors by which he seeks to deceive Christians and undermine the truth, as Irvingism, Puseyism, Rationalism.* He associated Puseyism with Romanism, which he considered *in its main doctrines and practices, infidel in all that concerns the ground of our soul's fellowship with God.*^{ix}

When Darby wrote there was a general disdain for Roman Catholic religion. For example the moderate Evangelical, Edward Bickersteth's *Family Prayers*, included the prayer that *we know our Bibles too well ever to listen to the lies of popery*.^x Pusey was fiercely opposed because of his Catholic tendencies. Darby was most critical of *Puseyism*, for he had, in his own words, been a *Puseyite* before being released from that system (from around 1827).^{xi}

Nevertheless, Darby saw in Pusey a love for Christ, for he wrote *There are two almighty powers of God—justice and mercy. Of these two, the Romanists put justice into Christ's hands, and mercy into Mary's. I believe it is this which stopped Pusey; he says he cannot get over this, and I believe it is because he loves Christ that he cannot*.^{xii} He cites (approvingly) J.H.Newman who stated: *when Dr. Pusey joined the movement, he (Dr. P.) saw that there ought to be more sobriety, more gravity, more careful pains, more sense of responsibility in the tracts and in the whole movement*.^{xiii}

I have found no evidence that the two ever met, or even if Pusey ever referred to Darby.^{xiv} It is known though that Pusey was well disposed toward Evangelicals throughout his lifetime, albeit those of more moderate inclinations. For example, he writes *Ever since I knew them I have loved those who are called "Evangelicals". I loved them, for their zeal for souls. I often thought them narrow; yet I was often drawn to individuals among them more than to others who held truths in common with myself*.^{xv} Although Pusey felt he could accept Evangelical beliefs, he considered that they did not go far enough, for example in their tendency toward individualism and by their neglect of the doctrine of the Church and eighteen hundred years of tradition.

As he told one Evangelical friend: *we look upon your views as imperfect, that you have taken up a portion of the truth only.*^{xvi}

David Forester has drawn attention to the importance of the German Pietist movement in Pusey's own *intellectual development*.^{xvii} He was exposed to this in studies of German theology in the 1820s and 1830s, although by then it had lost much of the spiritual fervour of its founder, Philipp Spener (1635-1705). Pietism stressed the importance of Bible reading, the concept of the priesthood of all believers, the practical nature of Christianity, and the need for personal holiness. It was those very principles that were stressed amongst the early Brethren. Interestingly, Count Zinzendorf, Spener's godson, played a leading role in the Moravian church, which in turn so influenced John Wesley, and consequently the modern Evangelical movement. Furthermore, E.H.Broadbent noted a *long constant movement* within Christianity of *radical dissent and spirituality*^{xviii} and in that context links together the Pietist, Moravian and Brethren movements.^{xix}

Darby/Brethren and Pusey/Tractarian contrasted

When one consults accounts of nineteenth century church history, there is a distinct lack of material relating to the Brethren^{xx, xxi}, and when mention is given it is often clouded in half truths. Bebbington is somewhat dismissive in referring to the Brethren as *another adventist sect*.^{xxii} The imminent personal return of the Lord Jesus Christ in glory and future events were an important tenet of Brethren belief, although there was a general increase in interest in these doctrines outside Brethren circles^{xxiii, xxiv}. It was considered that these teachings had been long neglected, and no more so than by Darby himself. This must not detract from the importance given to the other Evangelical doctrines, and indeed when toward the latter part of the nineteenth

century these were being increasingly discarded by the main denominations, none stood firmer for orthodoxy than the Brethren.

In the one reference relating to this course, it is stated that Darby founded the Brethren in Ireland^{xxv}. Although Darby was a major influence in the emergence of the Brethren, others were involved, in particular Anthony Norris Groves, and whilst the first recognisable Brethren meeting may well have been in Dublin, many others were to spring up in England soon after, seemingly spontaneously. Nevertheless, Darby's teaching has continued to have a major impact on Brethrenism, both Exclusive (which he led), but also Open.

One problem trying to understand the Brethren is the reluctance of members to provide records or to be seen as a denomination, as evidenced in the findings of the 1851 Religious Census, where several 'Brethren' meetings had been identified but were not attributed with this title. The Brethren looked to the early church, which *continued steadfastly in the apostle's doctrine and fellowship, and in the breaking of bread and prayer,*^{xxvi} for their model and inspiration, although it is unlikely that in the main they saw restoring the New Testament pattern as feasible or even desirable^{xxvii}. For example they largely rejected Irvingite notions concerning the current administration of apostolic offices and gifts. Broadbent remarked concerning the beginning of the Brethren movement there were *meetings where people with gifts should without disorder and strife, express their pious thoughts on the matters at hand and that others might judge.*^{xxviii}

Regarding the Oxford Movement, there is far more coverage^{xxix}. According to Liddon, *the Oxford Movement was a completion of the*

earlier revival of religion known as Evangelical. That revival was provoked by the prevalence of a latitudinarian theology in the last century, and by a dry and cold preaching of morality, ... which ... failed to assign its rightful place to the Person and Work of our Divine Redeemer.^{xxx} Dean Church saw the beginnings of the Oxford Movement as *a vigorous effort for the immediate defence of the Church against serious dangers, arising from the violent and threatening temper of the days of the Reform Bill.*^{xxxi}

John Henry Newman, often seen as the leader up to his defection to Roman Catholicism in 1845, *kept the day of Keble's assize sermon upon National Apostasy (14 July 1833) as the day when the Oxford Movement began.*^{xxxii} Pusey joined the Tractarians in 1835, having issued his tract on fasting, and from then on became a key member, taking over any recognisable (albeit reluctant) leadership after Newman had departed. *In the Apologia Newman ascribed to Pusey the power to be centre of the party – 'He was able to give a name, a form and a personality to what was without him a sort of mob'.*^{xxxiii}

Common influences in Brethren and Tractarian thought

One burning question is why two very distinct and spiritually vital movements around that time, of which Darby and Pusey are key exponents, should emerge. Interestingly, some of the early Brethren had Oxford connections. Darby made several visits to Oxford around 1831. F.W.Newman^{xxxiv} introduced him to Benjamin Wills Newton, fellow of Exeter College. Newton was to join Darby and would later lead the work in Plymouth, (joined later by James Harris, another fellow of Exeter College). At Oxford Newton introduced Darby to his friend Henry Bulteel, curate of St. Ebbe's Church, and together they supported him after he had preached a dramatic sermon denouncing the Establishment. Bulteel later became a member of the Irvingites.

The 'Oxford factor', featured in three important emerging movements, but links between Church and University were strong at that time.

Putting aside *spiritual factors*, a main reason why these movements emerged was it was as a result of the atmosphere and events prevailing at the time. This was a time of change. There had been revolutions on the continent and fear of revolution in Britain. The industrial and agricultural revolutions were gathering momentum, as was the movement of peoples from country to town. This was also the Age of Reform: Repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts (1828), Catholic Emancipation (1829), the First Great Reform Act (1832) and the Irish Church Temporalities Act (1833). For these mainly young idealistic Brethren and Tractarian men, from their privileged backgrounds, links with the Establishment and clear sense of duty (over that of rights), this gave cause for concern that ungodly elements would prevail *and the moral degradation and dissipation which go with it.*^{xxxv} The notion of a visible redeemed community, pure and set apart from the evil of the day, would have been appealing.

Another common influence was the Romantic Movement, which was in stark contrast to the Enlightenment spirit that preceded. This was the cult of sensibility reacting against the one of reason; it looked upon the world with pessimism rather than optimism; it favoured the past rather than modernity; and it valued the spiritual rather than the temporal. The Oxford Movement deferred to the ancient church and its traditions and attached great importance to the sacraments. (Liddon notes Pusey's links to prominent Romantics: Coleridge, Scott and Byron^{xxxvi}.) The Brethren looked toward the purity of the

first century church and its teaching had a distinctive other-worldly emphasis. Bebbington writes that Evangelicalism *was created by the Enlightenment*^{xxxvii}. Just as valid might be the notion that the Brethren and Oxford Movements were created by the Romantic Movement. But if so, the Romanticism here was no woolly sentimentality or vague pantheism, but was firmly rooted on the historical Christ as affirmed in the ancient creeds.

Finally, although we can look for common aspects between the two movements, it is unlikely the people involved appreciated this. Many Brethren saw any visible manifestation of the Church as largely corrupt and beyond reform^{xxxviii}, indeed the efforts of the Tractarians being *the Devils own counterfeit to the Brethren*.^{xxxix} Darby considered that the Tractarians gained their followers by putting on *a histrionic spectacle*, attracting those indifferent to *Christ as Saviour* to *outward worship*, which appealed to the fleshly nature.^{xl} It is likely that many Tractarians looked upon the Brethren as an extremist sect and a manifestation of the schismatic tendency that they so abhorred.

Darby and Pusey - Reflections on Ecclesiology

Two events upset Darby, whilst serving as an Anglican curate in Ireland. In 1827, Archbishop Magee of Dublin required converts to take the oaths of supremacy. Darby saw this as harmful, stopping his hitherto successful efforts of converting Roman Catholic peasants. In 1832, Archbishop Whatley moved forward proposals to restrict scripture teaching in schools, in deference to the Catholics. These events helped to convince him of the ruinous state of the church. Not that Darby could turn to Dissent, which he saw as having compromised itself by political agitation, and by its insistence of making denominational affiliation a condition for fellowship.

Darby's tract *Separation from Evil God's Principle of Unity*, demonstrated at an early stage his ecclesiological thinking. Whilst recognising the need for union in *an evil age*, it must not be one where principle was set aside or on the narrow beliefs of one or other sect. Whilst recognising Roman Catholicism demonstrated a form of unity, it was a false one, being based upon a false system. Later, he was to reject the principle of the Evangelical Alliance which *abhors the corruption that has entered into the church, and makes recognition of a clergy is the basis of the church, the sine qua non, the essential condition.*^{xli} For Darby *separation from evil, becomes the necessary and sole basis and principle, I do not say the power, of unity and since evil exists there cannot be union of which the Holy God is the centre and power but by separation from it.*^{xlii}

Like Pusey, Darby had a high regard for the Lord's Supper, although denying any notion of the *Real Presence*, for *of this unity and fellowship the Lord's Supper is the symbol and expression.*^{xliii} Unlike many of his Brethren contemporaries, but like Pusey, Darby advocated the practice of Infant Baptism, whilst abhorring any notion of baptismal regeneration.

Whilst recognising that many sincere Christians were caught up in these *evil ecclesiological systems*, he urged them to separate for *separation is the first element of unity and union.*^{xliv} Aspects, which Darby was later to develop, included the rejection of the notion of the Clergyman, which he saw as denying the authority of Christ and His Spirit. Even the ideas of a recognised oversight were not encouraged since in an age in which the Church was in ruins, and where there were no longer Apostles, no one was qualified to appoint the Elders, and any form of democracy was considered worldly. He also rejected the notion of 'Ecclesiastical Independency'^{xlv}, and private judgement,

since this denies the unity required of the one Body and the ability to provide godly discipline. Although Darby's views would seem overtly pessimistic, he believed it most important to obey God, and God would bless those who obey.

The split, which occurred at Plymouth (1845), followed by Darby's excommunication of the Bethesda meeting (1848) under the leadership of George Müller and Henry Craik, marked a critical turning point in the emergence of the Brethren movement. Tension between Darby and Newton had been building up because of Newton's own autocratic style and his rejection of Darby's dispensational and eschatological views.^{xlvi} However, it was Darby's charge that Newton had propagated false teaching by suggesting that Christ had taken upon himself the nature of fallen man, even though Newton was to retract, that saw the tension break and the two part ways. When the Bethesda meeting received into fellowship certain of Newton's followers, Darby responded by dissociating himself from Bethesda, and any that failed to do the same.

Disputation continues to this day as to the rights and wrongs of the positions taken and to the character of Darby himself.^{xlvii} F.F.Bruce has suggested there were two strands of teaching in Brethrenism up to 1845 relating to the principle of Christian unity: separation of evil, and the common life of the family of God.^{xlviii},^{xlix} But a choice then needed to be made. A.N.Groves, who represented the latter view was to later write to Darby: *So long as we judge Christ to be dwelling with man, that is our warrant for receiving him.*^l

Pusey's belief was in the One, Holy Catholic Apostolic Church, yet unlike his fellow Tractarians, Newman and Manning, he remained firmly rooted within the Anglican tradition. He could not be

persuaded of the claim of the Roman Catholic Church, that they were exclusively the Church of Christ. He believed that the one Church had many branches, although he looked forward to the day when the different branches would be reunited. He believed *absence of love and prayer and holiness are alone the real hinderences of reunion, for the organic unity of those portions of it (the Church) between whom intercommunication is suspended, but also it is the Divine conviction that what God willed must be 'in all things necessary, unity, in things doubtful, liberty, in all, charity'*.^{li} It would seem that Pusey had in mind primarily the re-union of the Roman Catholic, Eastern Orthodox and Anglican communions. Concerning the Lutheran and Calvinistic confessions, he held these *have errors of which we do not partake*.^{lii}

Pusey believed in the doctrine of the Apostolic Succession, and that Anglican belief was in line with the teaching of the Church Fathers. One of his great contributions to the Oxford Movement was to ensure these writings were preserved and made available. In his *Eirenicon* he sought to address objections raised by Manning who had by then come to the view that the Anglican Communion needed to submit to the authority of the Roman Church. He sought to demonstrate that the Anglican Church was carrying on the beliefs of the ancient Church, and that there were certain practices of the Roman Church not compatible. He wanted to *elicit a statement*, without success, (from the Roman Catholics), *of what practices were not de fide*.^{liii} He laid stress on the organic union enjoyed by Christians with one another through their union with Christ, irrespective of the tradition represented and despite the disruptions and conflicts that have taken place in the past.^{liv} Indeed, he was desirous to co-operate with all who proclaimed the truth of Christ.

In 1843, his preaching on the *Real Presence* caused him to be banned from preaching at the University for two years. His support of Bishop Philpotts in the Gorham matter (around 1850), and his views on Baptismal Regeneration, alienated many Evangelicals, as did his advocacy of the practice of Confession. Pusey has since been linked with Ritualism, although he dissociated himself from much of this practice^{lv}. What cannot be disputed was Pusey's high view for the Church, which was there to glorify its Head. He saw the Church as the main instrument for *converting the heathen* with missionaries needing to be subject to the authority and care of the Bishops^{lvi}.

Before leaving the subject of ecclesiology we should reflect on that of eschatology, which (for Darby at least) were closely linked. Darby's system of Dispensational Pre-Millennialism, adopted these days by groups as diverse as American fundamentalists and various Brethren and Pentecostal groups the world over, can be contrasted with Pusey's orthodox, milder form of Post-millennialism, which at the time was the view most widely accepted by Christians. Quite likely Darby's prophetic views were linked to his pessimistic view of the world and his tendency to disassociate from anything worldly, his perception of the growing tide of evil and his remnant mentality. This can be contrasted with Pusey's more optimistic perception that the world could get better through its christianisation, that there was a role Christians could play through public life and that the Church could again become united prior to Christ's personal return to Earth.

One might conclude by reflecting both Darby and Pusey stressed the importance of personal faith and repentance. Both rejected the notion of an invisible church (comprising only the 'true' believers), favoured

by many Evangelicals. Both worked toward that unity where *they all may be one; as thou Father, art in me, and I in thee*^{lvii}. Both brought to the fore the doctrine of the Church, which before had tended to be neglected. Whilst there were major, irreconcilable differences in their respective ecclesiological systems, there was also much that was common. Roger Shuff writes concerning a latter day Exclusive, James Taylor, who taught the notion of *the assembly as a sphere of practical salvation from the world*. Shuff points out *this high view of the Church is reminiscent of Puseyism, which always coloured his (Darby's) ecclesiology*.^{lviii}

Darby and Pusey – Defenders of the Faith

Essays and Reviews (1860), following so soon Darwin's *Origin of Species* (1859), was written by seven Anglicans (six of whom were clergymen). These challenged traditional Christian beliefs, stating Christianity needed to be reconciled with the findings of biblical criticism, modern science and the intellectual tendencies of the day. The final essay was by Benjamin Jowett, *On the Interpretation of Scripture*, deemed perhaps *the most profound of the contributions*,^{lix} and was particularly savaged by Darby and Pusey.

Darby's writings demonstrate he had studied and considered much of the new thinking. Concerning *Essays and Reviews*, he wrote *They are mischievous ... I agree with two Irish Archbishops, that they are dishonest, and with an English one, that they are very feeble*.^{lx} Concerning Jowett's essay he wrote *The others rest on alleged facts or discoveries ... but here there is nothing to lay hold ... It makes me not doubt of this or that, but doubtful of everything. I think it does me more harm than the others, if I am to have faith in God's word... Mr. Jowett is like a green morass all across ... If you had been in the bogs of Ireland, you would know that a green grassy spot is sure to be*

unsafe ... There are springs of infidelity in Mr. Jowett. We must lay them bare.^{lxi}

Liddon records how Pusey had sought to oppose Jowett, whose liberal views were well known when inaugurated as Oxford Professor of Greek in 1854.^{lxii} In a letter to the *Times* Pusey wrote *I never ... distrust the power of God's truth to abide any, the most searching inquiry. I have now for forty years, as a duty, read more anti-Christian writings than any probably of your readers ... I cannot imagine anything more demoralizing than that clergymen should profess their belief in great fundamental truths, and assert the contrary.*^{lxiii} In a letter to the *Guardian* Pusey is devastatingly dismissive: *The writers, in their own persons, rarely affirm anything, attempt to prove nothing, and throw doubt upon everything.*^{lxiv}

In 1864 Pusey's lectures of the Book of Daniel were published. The Book of Daniel was chosen as this had been particularly subject to criticism by the Essayists, for example affirming the (significant) prophetic element had been written with the benefit of hindsight.^{lxv} Pusey is meticulous when considering the text, and the objections raised. He noted *Disbelief had been the parent, not the offspring, of their criticism, their starting-point, not the winning-post of their course.* Concerning Jowett, he writes: *continued study of Professor Jowett's Essay makes one think sadly "What does there remain of Christianity, which the writer can believe?"*^{lxvi}

Pusey was a member of the committee, which in 1864 following the acquittal of two of the essayists, Williams and Wilson, on charges of heresy, had co-ordinated the signing of a declaration by 10,906 (nearly half of the) Anglican clergy in England, Wales and Ireland.

The declaration was *the Church maintains without reserve or qualification the Inspiration and Divine Authority of the whole Canonical Scriptures as not only containing but being the Word of God, and also teaches the eternal punishment of the wicked.* At the time Pusey wrote: *the common enemy, unbelief, would draw closer into one band all who love our Lord as their Redeemer and their God, and the Bible is the very Word of God.*^{lxvii}

The extent to which Darby or Pusey tried to accommodate the new scientific thinking, such as the notion of ‘geological ages’, is a matter for further investigation^{lxviii}. It would appear both Darby and Pusey were prepared to entertain ‘gap theory’^{lxix}, such as favoured by Thomas Chalmers. For example Darby wrote: *There might have been millions and millions of years between those two verses. In Genesis 1: 1, 2.*^{lxx} Pusey cited Jerome: *what eternities, what times, what originals of ages must we not think there before in which Angels, Thrones, Dominions and other powers served God.*^{lxxi} What is clear they both held resolutely to the inspiration and veracity of the scriptures, fiercely opposing any whom suggested otherwise.^{lxxii} And whilst both were prepared for the Faith to be scrutinised, addressing objections, they nevertheless believed in the importance of and need for personal faith.

Darby and Pusey – Spiritual influences and outlooks

Darby did not, it seems, have many intimate friends, and he remained single throughout his life. We know little of his family life although it is known they were well connected. His father was a wealthy landowner. His uncle, Admiral Sir Henry Darby, commanded the Bellerophon in the Battle of the Nile, and his Godfather was the great Lord Nelson (thus his middle name). Turner noted that at the time Darby abandoned a promising legal career his brother-in-law was the

Lord Chief Justice of Ireland and no doubt could have rose to the top of that profession.^{lxxiii} It appears he had a life long attachment to his mother.^{lxxiv} He could say late in life: *I have long, I suppose, looked at the portrait of my mother, who watched over my tender years with that care which a mother only knows how to bestow ... her eye fixed upon me the tender love which had me for its heart's object.*^{lxxv} Little is known about his other family members, although Newton recalled that Darby had a brother, who referred to him as *potted arrogance*^{lxxvi}.

In like manner, Pusey trod a lonesome path, although he did marry and have four children. The wife whom he loved died in 1839, and only one daughter was to survive him. Pusey was close to his elder brother, Philip. His cousin was the Evangelical reformer, Lord Shaftesbury. Like Darby, Pusey was also attached to his mother, who lived to a ripe age. His father was the local squire of the village that bore his name, and has been referred to *as an autocratic, though benevolent martinet.*^{lxxvii} Newton, commenting on Pusey's appointment as Regius Professor of Hebrew in 1828, suggested that Pusey owed this as much to his family's connection with the then Prime Minister, the Duke of Wellington, as anything else.^{lxxviii} His own family situation was important to him. Morbidity, self-condemnation and reproach, and a withdrawal from social interaction intensified after his wife's death. It is claimed that thereafter he never smiled, save when with children. Like Darby he had few intimate friends, although a life-long respect and affection remained for Keble and Newman.

When considering the extent Darby or Pusey can be regarded as spiritual men, one cannot ignore the serious criticisms against both men. Words like 'duplicity', 'arrogance', 'rigidity', 'morbidity' and

'harshness' spring to mind.^{lxxix} What is clear though is that both men were focused on Christ and took matters of spirituality and spiritual devotions with utmost seriousness. Both men stressed the need for personal holiness^{lxxx} and dwelt long and often on the sufferings of Christ stressing the cross of Christ and the efficacy of His shed blood to cleanse from sin and their personal identification with His death.

When we consider attitudes to the poor, numerous incidents from the lives of both men show their deep concern for and identification with the lowly, reminiscent of that of John Wesley. Darby had from his days as a curate in Ireland, when he happily lived and worked among the poor, always sought out those of lowly estate. A lack of material possessions and the adoption of a simple way of life were his hallmarks. Brethren annals are full of accounts of the acts of kindness and compassion shown by Darby, even to his most bitter opponents^{lxxxi}.

Likewise with Pusey, who from his married days rejected luxuries such as a carriage and servants, in order to support poor parishes. His later life was marked by austerity. In his life he sought out the poor. He was keen to establish works in the slum areas. We note, in 1867, his attending cholera victims in Bethnel Green. Pusey's attitude was clear: *Christ is probably more often to be found in the hovels of the poor than in the drawing rooms of the rich*^{lxxxii} and *we are all one in the eyes of our God ...her (the church) special heritage is the poor.*^{lxxxiii}

Darby's pre-occupations are shown in his 'Spiritual Songs', for example: *This world is a wilderness wide: I have nothing to seek or to choose, I've no thought in the waste to abide I've nought to regret, nor to lose ... 'Tis the treasure I've found in His love, That has made*

me a pilgrim below.^{lxxxiv} Near the end of his life Darby wrote *He is all we want ... I can look back and see a patience and a faithfulness, a goodness beyond all my thoughts.*^{lxxxv} Amongst the last words Pusey wrote were *Oh! then, long and long and long, and God will fill thee. More love, more love, more love!*^{lxxxvi} His will declared *I give my soul into the Hands of Almighty God, humbly beseeching Him to pardon all my sins, known to me or unknown, for the sole Merits of the Blood of my Redeemer, Jesus Christ.*^{lxxxvii}

Closing Remarks

Mr. Darby and Dr. Pusey were remarkable men; they were great men. They were giants within the Church, but having very different outlooks and perspectives. Their influence was phenomenal, and continues to remain so. They continue to be misunderstood and criticised to this day. They were indeed enigmatic, controversial, serious, complex, unusual, ‘focussed and driven’, men. Undoubtedly, they were flawed in character; quite likely their understanding was incomplete; in some things they were certainly wrong. But they would have been the first to acknowledge that at best they were *unprofitable servants*^{lxxxviii} having faith only in the one, who has no fault.

As we conclude we are aware we have barely scratched the surface. Whilst we can see that the differences between the two men are clearly evident, it is also true that the similarities are just as striking. Not only were they from similar backgrounds, having personalities which might be described as intense, lonely and perhaps rather odd, but they had much in common in their understanding of vital truth and vision of what could be wrought for Christ. One might speculate if their positions were reversed, and it was Darby who was the Oxford don and Pusey the Irish clergyman, what might have been.

It was their intense devotion to Christ and His church; their commitment to and unyielding belief in the Word of God; their love for the lowly: poor, disadvantaged and children; their rejection of what this world could offer; their sense of duty and diligence, high even by Victorian standards; it was all this that sets them apart from the rest and makes them so much alike.

Today's Brethren may look with concern over their struggling assemblies. Today's Anglicans may look with concern over the confusion and compromise which seems to abound in their church. Yet believers across the whole ecclesiological spectrum are seeking to come to grips fully with the truths of Holy Scripture, and determine how best to live for Christ in today's world. And this taken against a backdrop of prevailing secularism, multiple-faiths, moral evil, spiritual darkness and a widespread perception that the Christian faith is irrelevant, where Christian consensus no longer holds and 'the church' seemingly fails so dismally. Yet, I would suggest they can all learn much from our subjects and take heart they truly wanted to address those vital issues. It was upon the grace and mercy of the Lord Jesus Christ that they were dependent. It was unto Him and in His cause they were dedicated: body, soul and spirit; hearts and minds!

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Notes and References

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- ⁱ Bebbington, D.W., *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain*, pp2-17, suggests conversionism, activism, biblicism and crucicentrism are the four main qualities of Evangelical religion
- ⁱⁱ *Ibid*, p3
- ⁱⁱⁱ Turner, W.G., *John Nelson Darby – a biography*
- ^{iv} For example: Coad, *History of the Brethren Movement*, p106
- ^v Stevenson, R.L., *Travels with a Donkey in the Cevennes*, 1878
- ^{vi} Butler, Perry (ed), *Pusey Rediscovered*, SPCK, p ix
- ^{vii} Liddon, *Life of Edward Bouverie Pusey*, vol. 4, Appendix A
- ^{viii} For examples see bibliography
- ^{ix} Darby, *The true character of Romanism* (tract)
- ^x Bickersteth, E, *Family Prayers* (London, 1842), p221
- ^{xi} Darby, *Collected Writings*, vol 18, p156
- ^{xii} Darby, *Readings on 1 Peter*, p373
- ^{xiii} Darby, *Collected Writings*, vol. 18, p181
- ^{xiv} B.H.Newton refers to both Darby and Pusey, who he both knew at Oxford, several times in his memoirs, Fry MS, e.g. vol. 6, p18, vol. 7, p131, vol. 8, p.xi (216)
- ^{xv} Pusey, *An Eirenicon*, p4
- ^{xvi} MS Copy of Letter from E.B.Pusey to H.V.Elliot, 25 Sept 1839
- ^{xvii} Forrester, David, *The Young Doctor Pusey*, pp108-134
- ^{xviii} Phrase employed by Coad, *History of the Brethren Movement*, p91
- ^{xix} Broadbent, E.H., *The Pilgrim Church*
- ^{xx} Given the importance of the Brethren in overseas mission and in the religious life of Britain as linked to the Evangelical Revivals of 1859 and the Moody and Sankey campaigns, this omission is to be lamented
- ^{xxi} It occurs to me that Brethren archivists in the past have partly contributed to this ‘lack of understanding’. There has been general tendency to spiritualise and sermonise, thus causing these writings to lack appeal outside the close circle of Brethren sympathisers.
- ^{xxii} Bebbington, op cit, p86
- ^{xxiii} Rowdon introduces his *Origin of the Brethren* by describing a scene at a the Powerscourt Conference on Prophecy in 1833 where many of the early leading Brethren figures were present
- ^{xxiv} Callahan, JP, *Primitivist Piety – the Ecclesiology of the Early Brethren*, 123-152 elaborates upon the prophetic element of Brethren teaching and in context with the general prevailing moods
- ^{xxv} *A425 Study Guide*, p122
- ^{xxvi} Acts 2vv42
- ^{xxvii} Callahan, JP, op cit, argues that in the main the early Brethren were not *restorationist*
- ^{xxviii} Broadbent, op cit p270
- ^{xxix} One might care to note that in most general coverage of nineteenth century religious history that there will usually be significant coverage of the Oxford movement, yet hardly anything about the Brethren.
- ^{xxx} Liddon, op cit, Vol 1, p254

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- xxxⁱ Church, Dean, *The Oxford Movement* 1833-1845, p1
- xxxⁱⁱ Chadwick, O, *The Spirit of the Oxford Movement*, p23-24
- xxxⁱⁱⁱ Ibid, p37
- xxx^{iv} Francis William was brother to John Henry. He was associated with the Brethren in its early days before abandoning his faith. His book *Phases of Faith* provides interesting insights into the Brethren/Darby
- xxx^v See for example Darby's tract on *Progress of Democratic Power and its effect on the moral state of England*
- xxx^{vi} Liddon, op cit, vol. 1
- xxx^{vii} Bebbington, op cit, p74
- xxx^{viii} Callahan, JP, op cit, pp168-173 takes up this very theme
- xxx^{ix} This quote is attributable to William Kelly, (reference not found)
- xⁱ Darby, *Collected Writings*, vol 15, p299
- x^{li} Darby, *Collected Writings*, vol. 18, p289
- x^{lii} Darby, *Separation from Evil the Principle of Unity*, 1828
- x^{liii} Ibid
- x^{liv} Ibid
- x^{lv} The title given to a tract where Darby dismisses this whole notion
- x^{lvi} Darby's dispensationalism provided a distinction between the earthly hopes of the Jews and the heavenly hopes of the Church. He anticipated that Christ would imminently take His Church, prior to the Great Tribulation taking place, after which he would return to establish his millennial reign on Earth. Further discussion of this aspect of Darby's teaching is beyond the scope of this paper, although this was essentially linked to his teaching on the Church
- x^{lvii} Of the texts referred to in the Bibliography, Miller, Turner and Huebner (Exclusive Brethren) support the stand made by Darby on the Plymouth issue and the 'Bethesda question', whereas Neatby, Coad and Rowden (Open Brethren) are far more critical
- x^{lviii} See F.F.Brucses's preface to Rowdon's *Origin of the Brethren*
- x^{lix} Vine, WE, *The Church and the Churches*, provides an Open perspective on Ecclesiology. More recent discussions on the different strands of Brethren teaching can be found in Callahan, JP, op cit
- ¹ Groves, A.N., letter to Darby, March 10th 1863
- ^{li} Pusey, *Essays on Reunion*, 1867
- ^{lii} Ibid
- ^{liii} Butler (ed), op cit, p335
- ^{liv} Pusey, *Eirenicon*, pp 46, 59
- ^{lv} For example, see Liddon, op cit, vol. 4, p211-212
- ^{lvi} See Pusey's sermon on *The Church, converter of the Heathen*, 1838, preached at St.Mary's under the auspices of the SPG
- ^{lvii} John 17v21 – from Christ's prayer to His Father
- ^{lviii} Shuff, R.N, *Open to Closed*, Brethren Archivists & Historians Network review, vol 1. No 1, p18
- ^{lix} See *A102 Religion: Controversy and Conformity*, p34
- ^{lx} Darby, *Collected Writings*, p19
- ^{lxi} Ibid, p223 - 224
- ^{lxii} Liddon, op cit, vol. 4, ch. 1
- ^{lxiii} Letter to the Editor of the *Times*, February 19th, 1863

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- ^{lxiv} Letter to the Editor of the *Guardian*, March 6th, 1861
- ^{lxv} Darby also addresses the prophetic element of Daniel, a substantial part he believed was to be fulfilled at the coming of Christ
- ^{lxvi} Pusey, *Lectures on Daniel*, Pref, p. vi
- ^{lxvii} Letter to the Editor of the *Record*, February 17th, 1864
- ^{lxviii} For example: Embley, *Origins of the Brethren*, p224 suggests Darby may have not been completely 'literalist', citing Darby's writings, *Apologies*, vol2 pp160-6. Lough, *Dr. Pusey*, p164, suggests Pusey believed that a six day Creation could not be maintained
- ^{lxix} The gap theory proposes that millions of years may have elapsed between Genesis 1v1 and Genesis 1v2
- ^{lxx} Darby, *Collected Writings*, Vol 26, p326
- ^{lxxi} Pusey, *Lectures on Daniel*
- ^{lxxii} Ham, K, *Evolution – the Lie*, argues that many of today's moral and social evils are a result of accepting evolutionary notions and abandoning literal interpretations of scripture. One is inclined to think that Darby and Pusey would have agreed, and would seem to justify the efforts they made in the area of Christian Apologetics
- ^{lxxiii} Turner, W.G, *John Nelson Darby – a Biography*, p15
- ^{lxxiv} Turner's Darby biography suggested that Darby's mother had died whilst he was a child. I am grateful to Dr. Brady for pointing out to me research that has demonstrated that this was not the case
- ^{lxxv} Darby, *Collected Writings*, vol. 6, p129
- ^{lxxvi} Fry MS, vol. 7, p131 (216)
- ^{lxxvii} Forrester, op cit, p2
- ^{lxxviii} Fry MS, vol 2, p7
- ^{lxxix} Huebner, *Precious truths revived and defended through J.N.Darby*, and Butler (ed.), *Pusey Rediscovered*, do as much as any modern day writer to try and defend their subject from such charges
- ^{lxxx} The first sermon Pusey preached was on Hebrews 12v14 *Follow peace with all men and holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord.*
- ^{lxxxi} Coad, op cit, see for example pages 161-163
- ^{lxxxii} From a sermon *Christianity without the cross, a corruption of the gospel of Christ*, 1875
- ^{lxxxiii} Pusey, from an address to the Free Church Conference, reported by the *Norfolk Chronicle*, 1865. Amongst other things the common practice of imposing pew rents was attacked.
- ^{lxxxiv} Darby, *Songs of the Wilderness*, 1849
- ^{lxxxv} Darby, *Letters*, vol. 3, pp232-234
- ^{lxxxvi} Letter dated August 22, 1882, Liddon, op cit, vol 4, p376
- ^{lxxxvii} Liddon, vol 4, p390
- ^{lxxxviii} From Luke 17v10, Both Darby and Pusey returned to the theme of the *Unprofitable Servant* more than once