

2 To THEOPHILUS LINDSEY, 18 January 1770

MS: Dr. Williams's Library, MS. 12.12, f. 13-14

PRINTED: Rutt, I, i, pp. 106-109

ADDRESS: The Rev^d Mr Lindsey at Catterick in Yorkshire

POSTMARK: Leeds

Leeds. 18 Jan. 1770

Dear Sir

I have received your obliging letter, ~~and~~ inclosing those of the Berkley's,¹ which I am sorry to find have not at all disposed you to think more favourably of ~~the~~ people of their profession in this country. But from the nature of the human mind, when an opinion, or prejudice, is fixed to a certain degree, every //thing// we meet [wit]h, that has the least relation to it, tends to confirm us in it. I allow you to apply this maxim to me, as much as I do to you in this case; and as I do not think less favourably of you on account of this difference of opinion, I hope you will not the worse of me for it. I am obliged to you for your cautions, but I cannot conceive what danger I am in from ~~p~~ people with whom I never //had//, nor am ever likely to have the least connection. I should be very sorry if the Archdeacon² should think more unfavourably of the Academy at Warrington, and those who conduct it. As far as I can recollect, I was singular in my opinion concerning the toleration of popery. Mr Aikin³ I know was against me; and Mr Seddon's⁴ acquaintance //with D^r Berkley// is a late and casual thing. And tho' these two papists seem to think so favourably of me //and the academy// they are the only persons, that I have yet heard of, who have entertained the same sentiments concerning us. All that I know of the papists about Leeds is, that one of them is become a hearer of mine; but I believe it was chiefly owing to his wife, who had belonged to us, and who is now dead. I never had any conversation with ~~them~~ him. Nor, to my knowledge, did I ever converse with any papist in my life. We were brought up in a thorough abhorrence and contempt of them. But enough of this – I think the preliminary part of the pamphlet concerning Mr Venn⁵ of much [[more]] value than the rest. How he takes it, or what he will do, I am not informed. You are more acquainted with his friends – The Reviewers have taken it into their heads to censure as hasty and inaccurate the very best and most correct part of my Remarks on Balguy.⁶ I could not alter a word for the better, but the observations he has selected are I believe new. I think these important, and I am sure he did not understand them. As the writer addresses himself to me in so particular a manner, I had written a Reply; but D^r Price⁷ suppressed it, thinking it w^d demean me to take notice of anything anonymous. My

¹ Possibly Robert Berkeley (1713-1804), political writer [ODNB].

² Francis Blackburne (1705-1787), see 18 Dec 1769.

³ John Aikin (1713-1780), tutor and theological scholar. Aikin had succeeded John Taylor in the theology chair and as head of the academy in 1761 [ODNB].

⁴ John Seddon (1724-1770), see 18 Dec 1769.

⁵ Priestley, *Considerations on Differences of Opinion among Christians, with a Letter to the Rev. Mr. Venn, in answer to his Full and Free Examination* (London, 1769). See 18 Dec 1769.

⁶ Priestley, *Considerations on Church-Authority; occasioned by Dr. Balguy's Sermon, on that Subject; preached at Lambeth Chapel, and published by Order of the Archbishop* (London, 1769). See *Mon. Rev.*, XLI (1769), 368.

⁷ Richard Price (1723-1791), see 18 Dec 1769.

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letter, I suppose, is perished in the fire at Johnsons,⁸ together with anothe[er] that I had written to the person who signs Consisten[cy] in the London chronicle, and which D^r Price stopped for the same reason⁹ – I shall be glad to see Patrobas¹⁰ whenever it may be convenient to him to make the journey. My Dissertations on the Harmony will be in the Repository, as soon as I can so far recollect my scattered thoughts, and hints, as to recompose them.¹¹ As most of the copies of the Answer to Balguy are ~~–?~~ perished, and it will not be worth while to reprint it. I think to incorporate every thing of value in it in the Essay on Government.¹² Will you and the Archdⁿ¹³ suggest any hints for the improvement of that piece. If you ~~–?~~ //will// reduce into a few distinct observations what you have to allege against the toleration of popery, I will faithfully insert it in that piece, and I sincerely wish you w^d do it.¹⁴ At least tell me, in as few words as possible, what considerations I have omitted. I mean to enlarge that part of the book.

I have about 40 sets of the Repository by me, and I believe there are not many more in being. It cannot answer to reprint them, and I think to print Clemens separately, with my name.¹⁵ If the work for the future sell well, this first volume may be reprinted. The plates to Chart of Biography¹⁶ must be re-engraved. Have you any other observations to make on it?

With com^{ts} to Mrs Lindsey

I am Dear Sir yours &c.

J Priestley

⁸ Joseph Johnson (1738-1809), bookseller [ODNB]. ‘Early on the morning of 8 January 1770 Johnson and Payne’s shop and entire stock on Paternoster Row were destroyed in a fire [...] For the next six months Johnson operated out of temporary lodgings at No. 44’ [Helen Braithwaite, *Romanticism, Publishing and Dissent: Joseph Johnson and the Cause of Liberty* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2003), 20].

⁹ See 18 Dec 1769.

¹⁰ Lindsey’s second contribution to the *Theological Repository* under the pseudonym ‘Patrobas’ was ‘Brief Remarks concerning the Two Creations mentioned in the Sacred Writings’, *Theol. Repos.*, II (1770), 85-97.

¹¹ Priestley’s ‘Essays on the Harmony of the Evangelists’ were published in vol. ii of the *Theological Repository*. See *Theol. Repos.*, II (1770), 38-59, 98-122, 230-247, 313-327. Presumably the work was destroyed in the fire at Johnson’s referred to above.

¹² The *Considerations* were published with a second edition of Priestley’s *Essay on Government* in 1771.

¹³ Francis Blackburne (1705-1787), see 18 Dec 1769.

¹⁴ See Rutt I, i, 108. On Priestley’s plea for the toleration of Catholicism see Andrew Kippis’s review of the *Essay*, *Mon. Rev.*, XXXIX (1768), 473.

¹⁵ Priestley, *Observations on the Harmony of the Evangelists* [the first edition listed on ESTC is London?, 1776?].

¹⁶ See Priestley’s *A Description of a Chart of Biography* (Warrington, 1764) and *A Chart of Biography* (London, 1765). Presumably the plates for the *Chart* were also destroyed in the fire at Johnson’s.