

### 3 To THEOPHILUS LINDSEY, March 1770

MS: Dr. Williams's Library, MS. 12.12, f. 15-16

PRINTED: Rutt, I, i, pp. 101-104

ADDRESS: The Rev<sup>d</sup> Mr Lindsey at Catterick in Yorkshire

[(Leeds) Say. about Mar 1770]<sup>1</sup>

Dear Sir

I do take it amiss that you should pay the postage of your letter, tho' a few lines in it relate to the Theological Repository. I am sorry that Patrobas is engaged in so much business, and shall be glad to receive his essay for the first number of the next volume.<sup>2</sup> I am much obliged to the friends of this work for their generous offer of assistance. There will be occasion for it, but if the work ever answer, the money shall be returned.

You have probably seen my Answer to Mr Venn<sup>3</sup> before this time. Presently after I saw you, Mr Turner<sup>4</sup> advised me to write immediately, if I did it at all. I have reason to think that I have done myself considerable service by it in this neighbourhood. I know nothing how it has been received by Mr Venn, or his friends. He lately preached at Leeds for the benefit of the Infirmary; but the whole sermon //I am told// was upon the subject of our controversy, and he //again// declared that he would renounce his christianity if ~~2-~~ //some// opinions he mentioned were not true.

You will not like my hasty letter to D<sup>r</sup> Blackstone.<sup>5</sup> I did //it// by the advice of ~~M<sup>r</sup>~~ ~~J~~ Mr John Lee,<sup>6</sup> who most approved of it. But tho' I hope I have not made an improper return to his outward civility I neither repent of my //warmth// in the cause, nor have I done with the subject. I have nearly finished a piece which I shall call A view of the principles and conduct of the Protestant Dissenters in England, with regard to Religion and civil government, containing some strictures, on D<sup>r</sup> Blackstone's Commentaries and his Reply &c.<sup>7</sup> It is the finest and boldest thing I ever wrote. D<sup>r</sup> Blackstone is so little considered in the body of the work, that I do not know whether I should mention him on the title page or not. I must have your opinion and advice concerning this piece, tho' I send it you by the post. It cannot cost much. Perhaps the York Newsman can take it. I

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<sup>1</sup> Rutt dates the letter to 'soon after October 1769' [Rutt, I, i, 101].

<sup>2</sup> Patrobas [Lindsey], 'Brief Remarks concerning the Two Creations mentioned in the Sacred Writings', *Theol. Repos.*, II (1770), 85-97. See 21 Feb 1770.

<sup>3</sup> Henry Venn (1725-1797), see 18 Dec 1769. 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).

<sup>4</sup> William Turner (1714-1794), minister of Westgate Chapel, Wakefield [ODNB].

<sup>5</sup> Sir William Blackstone (1723-1780), legal writer and judge, author of *Commentaries on the Laws of England* (1765-9) [ODNB]. See Priestley's *Remarks on some Paragraphs in the Fourth Volume of Dr. Blackstone's Commentaries on the Laws of England, relating to the Dissenters* (London, 1769) and *A View of the Principles and Conduct of the Protestant Dissenters, with respect to the Civil and Ecclesiastical Constitution of England* (London, 1769).

<sup>6</sup> John Lee (1733-1793), lawyer and politician, M. P. for Clitheroe (1782-90) and for Higham Ferrers (1790-93). Lee became solicitor general in Rockingham's administration in 1782 and attorney general in 1783 [ODNB]. Priestley wrote that 'His friendship was a source of much greater satisfaction and advantage to me after I came to reside in London, and especially at the time of my leaving Lord Shelburne, when my prospects wore a rather cloudy aspect' [Rutt, I, i, 86].

<sup>7</sup> This *View* was "written October, 1769." See Dr. Priestley's *note*, W. XXII. 355. [Rutt, I, ii, 103].

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should have written the thing sooner, but I have been engaged in finishing my Familiar Introduction to the theory and practice of Perspective,<sup>8</sup> which I begin to print this week.

I did not see L<sup>d</sup> H-n.<sup>9</sup> As I was about to set out, I heard that he was returned to London. I shall be glad of your company another year. I have not seen the Free Britons' Memorial.<sup>10</sup> Indeed I hardly read any political pamphlets; but I will get to see this if I can.

I thank you for your whole letter, and with my own and my wife's compliments to you and M<sup>rs</sup> Lindsay I am, Dear Sir,

yours sincerely

J Priestley

My compliments to the Archdeacon.<sup>11</sup> I must have his censure of my work, unless from prudential considerations he thinks proper to decline it.

I sent you and him copies of the Ans<sup>r</sup> to Mr Venn by Mr Todd.<sup>12</sup>

I hope to hear from you soon

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<sup>8</sup> Priestley, *A Familiar Introduction to the Theory and Practice of Perspective* (London, 1770).

<sup>9</sup> Theophilus Henry Hastings (1728-1804), Lindsey's godfather [Rutt, I, ii, 103].

<sup>10</sup> William Bolla (d. 1776), *The Free Britons Memorial, to all the Freeholders, Citizens and Burgesses, who elect the Members of the British Parliament, presented in order to the Effectual Defence of their Injured Right of Election* (London, 1769); *The Free Britons Supplemental Memorial to the Electors of the Members of the British Parliament; wherein the Origin of Parliaments in Europe, and other Interesting Matters are considered* (London, 1770).

<sup>11</sup> Francis Blackburne (1705-1787), see 18 Dec 1769.

<sup>12</sup> John Todd (1736-1811), bookseller at the Stonegate in York [*Gent. Mag.*, LXXXI (1811), 493].