

## 5 To THEOPHILUS LINDSEY, 30 July 1770

MS: Dr. Williams's Library, MS. 12.12, f. 19

PRINTED: Rutt, I, i, pp. 116-117; Schofield, no. 29

[(30 July 70)]

Dear Sir

I thank you for your obliging invitation to Catterick, but it will hardly be in my power to make any more journeys this summer. If I have the pleasure of seeing you, it must, I believe, be at Leeds, where you will be a very welcome guest. I have sat down very closely to my History of Experimental Philosophy.<sup>1</sup> I make a point of giving six hours a day to it, which in six years, I hope, will do a good deal of business. I am afraid, however, of being much retarded for want of books, for I can, ~~not~~ //at// present, only command the materials I have. I should be certain to lose a great part of my labour, if I were to begin to compose any part of the work till I have nearly all the books that would be of any use to me relating to it. Notwithstanding very considerable assistance, I find I must be at very great expense myself. I have already expended about 100£, and now that I am in for it, shall risk a good deal more. I have had a large hamper of books sent me from a person unknown.<sup>2</sup>

Please to give my compliments to his Grace,<sup>3</sup> and tell him that I think myself greatly obliged to him for his Encyclopediè; ~~and~~ but as I //do not// find it contains any original experiments, it will be of little or no use to me; and therefore he may depend upon my returning it before winter, along with the other books I received ~~not~~ with it. Kercher,<sup>4</sup> the most useful of them, I had purchased before his ~~arrival~~ arrived.

Some of my friends talk of making a subscription, to assist me in defraying the necessary expenses of this work, but I do not know what they have done. I believe the first application will be made to the Duke.<sup>5</sup>

My Ans<sup>r</sup> to Mr Enfield<sup>6</sup> is now printed off, and I hope I have quite done with controversy. All I intend to do along with the History is to finish the Harmony of the Evangelists,<sup>7</sup> and write small pieces for the Repository, another N<sup>o</sup> of which is nearly printed.

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<sup>1</sup> Encouraged by the success of his *History of Electricity*, Priestley had planned an ambitious *History and Present State of all the Branches of Experimental Philosophy*. The *History of Vision Light and Colours* was intended as the first part of this larger work, however due to poor sales Priestley eventually abandoned the project. See *Proposals for printing by Subscription, The History and Present State of Discoveries relating to Vision, Light, and Colours* (Leeds, 1771); Rutt, I, i, 77-78.

<sup>2</sup> Sir George Savile (1726-1784), one of the two country Members of Parliament for Yorkshire [ODNB]. See F. W. Gibb, *Joseph Priestley: Adventurer in Science and Champion of Truth* (London: Thomas Nelson, 1965), 51.

<sup>3</sup> Hugh Percy, first duke of Northumberland (bap. 1712, d. 1786), see 30 May 1770.

<sup>4</sup> Athanasius Kircher (1602-1680), German Jesuit scholar.

<sup>5</sup> The Duke of Northumberland.

<sup>6</sup> William Enfield (1741-1797), Unitarian minister to the Cairo Street Chapel in Warrington, tutor in belles-lettres at Warrington Academy and rector academiae. In *Remarks on Several Late Publications relative to the Dissenters; in a letter to Dr Priestley* (1770) Enfield had attacked Priestley's three recent works aggressively advocating the dissenting cause [ODNB]. The text referred to is Priestley, *Letters to the Author of Remarks on Several Late Publications relative to the Dissenters, in a Letter to Dr. Priestley* (London, 1770).

<sup>7</sup> Priestley, *Observations on the Harmony of the Evangelists* (London?, 1776?). Originally published as 'Essays on the Harmony of the Evangelists' under the pseudonym of Liberius, *Theol. Repos.*, II (1770).

5 To THEOPHILUS LINDSEY, 30 July 1770

I am sorry to hear that several friends to the Warrington Academy intend to withdraw their subscriptions, on account of Mr Enfield's sentiments, expressed in his late pamphlet.<sup>8</sup> I have written to those with whom I have any influence, to prevent it, if possible, and hope to succeed. Mr Aikin<sup>9</sup> will be exceedingly distressed. He is alarmed at every thing

I am Dear Sir  
yours sincerely  
J Priestley

Leeds 30 July 1770.

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<sup>8</sup> Probably a reference to Enfield's critical comments on dissenting education. See Enfield, *Remarks on Several Late Publications relative to the Dissenters; in a Letter to Dr. Priestley* (London, 1770), 34-35.

<sup>9</sup> John Aikin (1713-1780), see 18 Jan 1770.