

7 To THEOPHILUS LINDSEY, 1 November 1770

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ADDRESS: The Rev^d Mr Lindsey at Catterick Yorkshire

POSTMARK: Leeds

[(1 Nov. 70)]

Dear Sir

I am afraid I have inadvertently brought myself into a scrape, from which I may not be able to help myself, and therefore I //have// recourse to you. I told you that the two letters in the London chronicle induced me to write an answer; tho', ~~as~~ as you will see, I had a farther view than merely answering his silly cavilling. However, † on friday last, I had a letter from Mr Griffiths,¹ informing me, that the ~~Review~~ writer in the Chronicle is not, as he pretends, the Reviewer of my book. Upon this I wrote to the printer of the Chronicle, to suppress the letter I sent him; but if that notice should come too late, to print the letter I then wrote him also, acknowledging the mistake I was under when I wrote the former, and expressing more contempt of my antagonist, as having assumed a character that did not belong to him. Now I am really sorry that I have attacked the Reviewer unjustly; and it is very probable the Dissenter and Reviewer will reply; but I am determined to write no more in my own name, and do not care to write under a feigned one; and yet it is possible that a friend might be of some service to me, by repressing the insolence with which I expect to be treated. I regret much that I did not first send you the letter for the Chronicle, but I do not desire you to vindicate any thing that is wrong, and that you do not approve; but if integrity and truth be at the bottom, let them atone for anything else.

I am exceedingly glad that you like the scheme and conduct of the Repository so well. I do assure you that your approbation of it is one of the greatest encouragements I have to continue it; but I really hope it doth good, and so long as that is the case, it shall not die, if there be a possibility of keeping it alive. I think D^r Duchal's piece² a very good article, and am much shocked that our good friend the Archdⁿ³ in a letter I received along with yours, should question his belief of the christian revelation. He has much more reason to question my belief of christianity; and yet I think I love and value it as much as those who are more orthodox than himself. Nay I am sure that I feel more as a christian since I have thought with so much freedom than before.

Since I wrote the Essays on the Harmony⁴ I have met with a much larger edition of Mr Mann's⁵ Dissertations in Latin, with additional arguments &c of which I intend to give an account, in a supplement to what I have written – I do not lay any stress (as any person may see) on several of the transpositions I have proposed, tho I think some of

¹ Ralph Griffiths (1720?-1803), journal editor and bookseller, owner of the *Monthly Review* [ODNB].

² James Duchal, 'A Dissertation on the Obligation of Truth, as concerned in Subscriptions to Articles of Religion', *Theol. Repos.*, II (1770), 191-218.

³ Francis Blackburne (1705-1787), see 18 Dec 1769.

⁴ Liberius [Priestley], 'Essays on the Harmony of the Evangelists', *Theol. Repos.*, II (1770).

⁵ Nicholas Mann (bap. 1680?, d. 1753), theological writer, author of *Critical Notes on some Passages of Scripture comparing them with the Most Ancient Versions, and restoring them to their Original Reading, or True Sense* (1747) and *Of the True Years of the Birth and of the Death of Christ: Two Chronological Dissertations* (1733; Latin version, with additions, 1742 and 1752) [ODNB].

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them very probable; and I am clearly of opinion that christianity will be a gainer by such freedoms as I have taken with the Evangelists. I shall take much greater liberties with the apostolical epistles, as you will soon see, in the character of Paulinus, under which signature I intend to publish a great number of free and original remarks.⁶ I shall open the next volume of the Repository with a new presumptive argument for the truth of revelation, under the signature of Clemens.⁷ I hope you will not dislike it. I have not now time to finish what I proposed with respect to the former article of Clemens. I have //indeed// nearly completed my collation of the Fathers but I have not time to read them, either for that, or any other purpose. I am pretty hard at work on a volume of my History of Experimental Philosophy,⁸ and hope to have a 4^{to}, about as large as my History of Electricity,⁹ finished some time the next spring. You flatter me with respect to my talent of making dark things perspicuous; but if I have not got some skill of that kind, I have taught school, and given lectures many years to little purpose. Theology, notwithstanding my other pursuits, is my favourite study; and if I live to complete my other schemes, I shall with pleasure devote myself almost intirely to the study of the scriptures. I believe there is in them enough to employ, and reward the application of us all.

I am
Dear Sir
most affectionately
yours εν χριστη¹⁰
J Priestley

1 Nov^r 1770. Leeds.

I shall send yours to Mr Turner¹¹ today.

⁶ Under the pseudonym of Paulinus, Priestley published 'Observations and Queries concerning Judas Iscariot's being Present or not Present at the Institution of the Lord's Supper', *Theol. Repos.*, I (1769), 141-146, 'Observations on Christ's Proof of a Resurrection, from the Books of Moses', *Theol. Repos.*, I (1769), 300-303, 'Observations on the Apostleship of Matthias', *Theol. Repos.*, I (1769), 376-381, 'Remarks on Romans v. 12-14', *Theol. Repos.*, II (1770), 154-158, 'Observations on St. Paul's Reasoning concerning Melchizedec', *Theol. Repos.*, II (1770), 283-290.

⁷ Clemens [Priestley], 'On the Analogy of the Divine Dispensations', *Theol. Repos.*, III (1771). This Essay was prefixed, in 1782, to the *Institutes*, Pt. iii. [Rutt].

⁸ See 30 Jul 1770.

⁹ Priestley, *The History and Present State of Electricity* (London, 1767).

¹⁰ 'in Christ'.

¹¹ William Turner (1714-1794), see Mar 1770.