

18 To THEOPHILUS LINDSEY, June or July 1772

MS: Dr. Williams's Library, MS. 12.12, f. 41-42
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[June or July 1772]

Dear Sir

You will blame me, and with great appearance of justice, for neglecting your correspondence so long. The truth is that I have been so much engaged in pursuits foreign to yours, that I had nothing of consequence to communicate to you. I really have neither read nor written any thing this long time; but I have //been// uncommonly successful in my experiments on the subject of air. I was sensible also that, with respect to ~~the~~ questions of theology, and the state of religious liberty &c Mr Turner's¹ correspondence would be of more value to you than mine could be.

I have not yet seen D^r Kippis's pamphlet,² but am truly sorry that he should have given occasion to a letter, which I see addressed to him in the public papers. I flatter myself, however, that you will not have the less favourable hearing from appearing to have had no connection with us. In the end, this little difference may be of service to both. Our supposed agreement was certainly of disservice to both. But, indeed, whether we agree or disagree, a handle will be made of it to our //common// prejudice.

I must now come to a subject more immediately interesting to myself. Lord Shelburne³ has made repeated proposals to me by Dr Price,⁴ and last week in person, to be his librarian, and superintend the education of his sons, having a tutor under me, and also to collect information for him with respect to subjects of parliamentary discussion &c &c. He will immediately make a very handsome settlement upon me for life, and provide me a house adjoining to ~~my~~ his own, both in the town and country. In the mean time he gives me what time I chuse both for accepting the proposal, and removing from my present situation. He has also no objection to my continuing to preach wherever I may have opportunity. He does not expect to engage much of my time, and hopes I may prosecute all my own pursuits with more advantage. I own that I am inclined to accept of this proposal, and I am satisfied that I am doing no more good in my present situation than ~~I~~ another may do, and less than many others, ~~—~~ //by reason of// my being more particularly obnoxious on account of my religious sentiments.

As you know the world much better than I do, I shall be obliged to you for any hints that you may be able to suggest for the government of my conduct in this affair, on which my future happiness and usefulness must very much depend.

I have been obliged, you will see, to close the Repository with proposals to reprint the first volume by subscription. I lose more than 30 £ by the last; but when complete sets can be had, I hope I shall be in the way of being indemnified.

¹ William Turner (1714-1794), see 30 Mar 1770.

² Andrew Kippis, *A Vindication of the Protestant Dissenting Ministers, with regard to their Late Application to Parliament* (London, 1772).

³ William Petty [formerly Fitzmaurice], second earl of Shelburne and first marquess of Lansdowne (1737-1805), prime minister [ODNB].

⁴ Richard Price (1723-1791), see 18 Dec 1769.

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I found it inconvenient to make the alteration you proposed in //the// arrangement of the Triumph of Truth,⁵ and as there is great difference in taste with respect to these things, I hope you will not be much dissatisfied with it in its present form. – Mr Turner and I have fixed to be at York on Monday next, to stay over Tuesday, and should be happy in meeting you there,

with compliments to M^{rs} Lindsey, yours sincerely
J Priestley.

⁵ Priestley, *The Triumph of Truth; being an Account of the Trial of Mr. E. Elwall, for Heresy and Blasphemy, at Stafford Assizes, before Judge Denton* (London, 1775?), second edn. (on the dating see May 1772).