

30 To THEOPHILUS LINDSEY, 26 August 1787

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ADDRESS: The Rev^d Mr Lindsey Essex Street London

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Birm 2 ~~Sept~~^f//26 Aug.// 1787

Dear friend

I now think it a long time, indeed, since your last, which was from Richmond, and in which you said you hoped to be in London in ten days, and should then write again. On your return I imagine you would find a letter from me, as it would be at your house not long after your setting out. That contained directions about the presents, which I was particularly desirous of being sent in time. But there is no foreseeing what will happen. By this time I hope that all is set to rights.¹

The Archdeacon had indeed an Euthanasia,² and I find his friend the Bp of Carlisle died about the same time, and //at// about the same age.³ They have been useful men in their day, and you justly observe none are without their failings, and least of all great minds. This I see confirmed, and I am sorry to see it so much so, in Beausobre's⁴ History of the Reformation, which I have read thro' with peculiar satisfaction. Luther⁵ had great defects indeed, and of a very disagreeable kind, especially ~~envy~~ //envy//, and dislike of other reformers[.] He wished all to follow him, and was angry if they went one step farther. His behaviour to Carlostadt⁶ and Zuinglius⁷ &c is inexcusable. But he had great and good qualities notwithstanding, and would, I doubt not, have been an intrepid martyr. Beausobre is far more satisfactory than Sleidan,⁸ but I am sorry that he goes no farther than the year 1530. He certainly meant to have written more. The last volume is particularly interesting.

Tomorrow I and my wife set out on a journey to Castle head, where I spent a month about this time the last year, and from which I returned so much recruited. I hope for the same benefit now, tho I have not so much to complain of as I had then, ~~they~~ //and yet// I have some unpleasant symptoms. I propose to be absent three sundays, which is near a month, and shall write to you when I have been there about a week. In the mean time I shall be happy to hear from you (Castle head near Lancaster) then your letters will be peculiarly acceptable, as I shall be almost out of the world, and hear nothing. I do not mean, however, to be quite idle. On my journey the last year I wrote the greatest part of

¹ The previous four sentences are omitted from Rutt's edition.

² Francis Blackburne had died at his home in Richmond on 7 August 1787.

³ Edmund Law, who died at Rose Castle, Carlisle on 14 August 1787 aged eighty five, in fact three years older than his friend Blackburne.

⁴ Isaac de Beausobre (1659-1738), author of *Histoire de la Réforme depuis 1517 jusqu'à 1530* published posthumously at Berlin in 1785 [DHGE].

⁵ Martin Luther (1483-1546), founder of the German Reformation [ODCC].

⁶ Andreas Bodenstein von Karlstadt (1486-1541), German theologian and radical reformer [OER].

⁷ Huldrych Zuingli (1484-1531), Protestant reformer [OER].

⁸ Johannes Sleidanus [Eng., Sleidan] (1506-1556), German humanist, diplomat, and historiographer, author of *De Statu Religionis et Reipublicae Carolus V Caesare Commentarii* (1555) [OER].

my Letters to Philosophical Unbelievers,⁹ and tho I do not intend to do so much, I hope to find time to do something, at least in reading.

I shall be glad to see the Archdeacon's posthumous pieces, especially the memoirs of himself, tho I hope there will be nothing about me in them.¹⁰ I am sorry to see you left out in [[the]] management of that affair, tho I doubt not we may confide in the prudence of[f] those who have the trust.

I really never read Mr Christies Sermons,¹¹ they were so wretchedly printed. Your own Catechist¹² would be a much better thing to distribute, and extracts from your other writings. – In a letter from Mr Palmer in Scotland,¹³ you will see that he corresponds with Mr Robinson of Cambridge¹⁴ as an avowed unitarian. But he ought to make a public declaration, after what he has written.

Yours & M^{rs} Lindsey's most affectionately, J Priestley

P.S. Give my particular respects to M^{rs} Rayner.¹⁵ I wish much to know how she does. Perhaps you may have seen Mr Shore¹⁶ on your journey, and may know how he is disposed with respect to me. My wife and son desire to be remembered to you. He is very thankful for you kind notice of him. I hope he will do very well.

⁹ Probably the second part of Priestley's work, published in 1787. See *Letters to a Philosophical Unbeliever. Part II. Containing a State of the Evidence of Revealed Religion, with Animadversions on the Two Last Chapters of the First Volume of Mr. Gibbon's History of the Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* (Birmingham, 1787).

¹⁰ Blackburne's *Works, Theological and Miscellaneous*, together with a detailed memoir, were edited by his son and published by Benjamin Flower, a radical Cambridge publisher, in seven volumes [ODNB].

¹¹ ? William Christie (1748-1823), *Discourses on the Divine Unity: or, a Scriptural Proof and Demonstration of the One Supreme Deity of the God and Father of All; and of the Subordinate Character and Inferior Nature of our Lord Jesus Christ; with a Confutation of the Doctrine of a Coequal and Consubstantial Trinity in Unity and a Full Reply to the Objections of Trinitarians* (Montrose, 1784).

¹² Lindsey, *The Catechist: or, an Inquiry into the Doctrine of the Scriptures, concerning the Only True God and Object of Religious Worship. In Two Parts* (London, 1781). The text was published by Johnson in 1792.

¹³ Thomas Fyshe Palmer (1747-1802), see 14 Jul 1787.

¹⁴ Robert Robinson (1735-1790), Baptist minister, author of *A Plea for the Divinity of Our Lord Jesus Christ. In a Pastoral Letter addressed to a Congregation of Protestant Dissenters at Cambridge* (Cambridge, 1776) [ODNB].

¹⁵ Elizabeth Rayner (d. 1800), see 17 May 1786.

¹⁶ Samuel Shore (1738?-1828) [Rutt, I, i, 61] [*Mon. Rep.*, III (1829), 66-70].