

36 To THEOPHILUS LINDSEY, 29 June 1788

MS: Dr. Williams's Library, MS. 12.12, pp. 74-75

PRINTED: Rutt, I, ii, pp. 10-11

ADDRESS: The Rev^d Mr Lindsey Essex Street London

POSTMARK: Birmingham, Oct 01 1788

ENDORSEMENT: June. 28. 1788. N. B. To mention what is said to Mr Lancaster[?], and then to burn the letter

[Sep^r ~~June~~]

Birm Ju 29. 1788¹

Dear friend

It is a sore disappointment both to me and my wife, that you do not come to Birmingham. Indeed many others as well as we expected great pleasure from the interview. ~~?~~ I cannot but say I was a little apprehensive of it when I went to the sea. But October is often as pleasant travelling as any time of the year, except that the days are short. However I shall not urge you at present, but shall hope to manage better another year. You must come about the time of our Charity Sermon, or a month later, when the days are the longest.

I beg you would return my thanks to your quondam Catholic friend for his present. My wife and I were much amused with what he reported for Mr Coghlan.² Many persons as well as my wife were, no doubt, much pleased with Mr Beringtons³ sermon on the occasion you mention; but all agreed that whatever favourable impression was made upon them by the sermon, was effectually done away by the exhibition of the mass.

I am amused with Mr Harrison's⁴ violence. There would certainly be a persecution of us if the times were favourable, but happily they are not, and such things as these deserve not the least notice.

I thank you for M^r Dyer's Proposals⁵ I have done something, and shall do more for him, but I fear it is little that can be procured //by// this ~~?~~ //means//, and it is so hackneyed, that it is ~~not~~ now rather irksome to apply in this way.

I cannot well help subscribing to Dr. Geddes,⁶ but I should be surprised if his subscription of a thousand be ever full. If he would listen to me, I would advise him to publish his Translations first, in one volume, and his Notes afterwards. But he is an ostentatious man, and will do every thing in the most splendid manner.⁷ However I shall forbear sending my subscription some time, and may give him my advice along with it;

¹ Rutt's edition dates this letter 'Sep 29 1788'. The postmark, and the fact that Priestley refers to travelling in October, favour Rutt's dating, yet a note of Lindsey's on the MS clearly states 'June. 28. 1788'.

² James Peter Coghlan (1731?-1800), Roman Catholic printer and publisher. In the 1780s Coghlan published a large number of documents relating to the Catholic struggle for emancipation that were issued by the Catholic Committee [ODNB].

³ Joseph Berington (1743-1827), Roman Catholic priest and religious controversialist, author of several works advocating toleration for English Catholics [ODNB].

⁴ ? Ralph Harrison, minister of Cross Street Chapel with Thomas Barnes.

⁵ George Dyer (1755-1841), author and advocate of political reform [ODNB].

⁶ Alexander Geddes's subscription for a new translation of the Bible. Priestley is listed as a subscriber in Geddes's *Dr. Geddes's General Answer to the Queries, Counsils, and Criticisms that have been communicated to him since the publication of his Proposals for Printing a New Translation of the Bible* (London, 1790), 31.

⁷ This sentence is omitted from Rutt's edition.

and if he find that subscriptions do not come in as he expected, he may be the better disposed to listen to me.

The first opportunity I have I will send you a letter I have just received from Mr Hutton,⁸ copaster with Mr Taylor in Dublin,⁹ representing the state of things there with respect to free inquiry. I saw him a year ago, and liked him much. [He] appeared to me as zealous for the divin[e] unity, and every thing good; but for want of boo[ks] he can do nothing where he is. Nothing of mine or yours is to be had in Dublin. I was thinking it might do well to send him some books. – I am concerned to hear of M^r Hammond's¹⁰ illness. Such men are rare, and much wanted – I like Mr Frennd's¹¹ piece much, but wish he had deferred the publication till after the issue of his cause. I rather fear he is deficient in prudence¹² – I have heard nothing from Oxford any more than yourself. I thank you for Mr Palmer's letter,¹³ but I had one to the same purpose myself. Mr Christie¹⁴ is, I hope, too much prejudiced ag^t him. With my wife, best respects yours & M^{rs} Lindsey's
most affectionately J Priestley

⁸ Joseph Hutton, minister of Eustace Street congregation, Dublin, 1788-1856.

⁹ Philip Taylor, minister of Eustace Street congregation, Dublin, 1771-1831.

¹⁰ ? Revd John Hammond of Fenny-Stanton, Cambridgeshire, listed as a member of the Unitarian Society for promoting Christian Knowledge and the Practice of Virtue, 1791. See *Unitarian Society* (London, 1791?, 12).

¹¹ William Frennd (1757-1841), religious writer and actuary [*ODNB*]. The piece is probably Frennd's *Thoughts on Subscription to Religious Tests* (St Ives, 1788) which resulted in dismissal from his tutorship (but not yet his fellowship) at Jesus College.

¹² This sentence is omitted from Rutt's edition.

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

¹⁴ William Christie (1750-1823), see 14 Jul 1787.