

39 To THEOPHILUS LINDSEY, 7? February, 1789

MS: Dr. Williams's Library, MS. 12.12, f. 78-79.
PRINTED: Rutt, I, ii, pp. 18-19.¹

[Probably Feb (abt 7-) 1789]

Dear friend

I have received the last parcel of MSS that I sent you, and am glad to find that they escaped censure better than the preceding. However, I do not despair of making the work, in all respects, what you wish it to be.² But you expect originality where it is not to be had. In a general history, many things must be said which have often been said before, and cannot be said better. For example, a brief account of the principal writers is absolutely necessary in all the periods of the history, ~~and~~ as well as a particular account of all in the earlier periods; but those I shall profess to take, for the most³ [part, from Cave or Dupin.⁴

I now send the remainder of the work, and a few additions which I foresee will increase as I read other histories, which I am doing, beginning with Nicephorus⁵ – I hope you will be able to get me Mosheim,⁶ tho I really expect little from him and therefore do not desire you to be in any hurry about it. I have already so far looked into Fleury⁷ or Sueur,⁸ as to see that I made no great omissions, and to be directed to authorities; and for some things I have at present quoted the former, till I can verify what he has given by some early writers, but some common place matters I shall probably leave as quoted from him. They [will not make many] pages in my work. [As to Lardner,⁹ I really think it better to leave what I have taken from him, on his authority, which no person will question.

I mean] to introduce more of the history of the Jews which I shall professedly take from Basnage[.]¹⁰ With all this there will be more that is truly original in my history than in almost any other, especially in what is of the greatest importance, the natural progress of opinions, which has always been strongly¹¹ misconceived and misrepresented.

The work will be larger than I intended it to be and not much less than my history of early opinions.¹² I [text missing] more respectable to pri[nt] [text missing] I wish you

¹ The MS is undated, and is badly torn so that some of the text is missing. The letter is printed incompletely in Rutt's edition dated '1789'.

² The previous two sentences are omitted from Rutt's edition.

³ Here the MS is torn, the following text in parenthesis is from Rutt's edition.

⁴ William Cave (1637-1713), English divine and Church historian [ODNB], and Louis Ellies Dupin, (1657-1719), Gallican theologian [ODCC].

⁵ Nicephorus Callistus (c. 1256-1335), 'Xanthopoulos', Byzantine historian of Constantinople [ODCC].

⁶ Johann Lorenz von Mosheim (1694-1755), see 5 Feb 1789.

⁷ Claude Fleury (1640-1723), ecclesiastical historian, author of *Histoire Ecclésiastique* (1691-1720) [ODCC].

⁸ Jean le Sueur, ecclesiastical historian, author of *Histoire de l'Eglise et de l'Empire*, 6 vols. (Genève, 1674).

⁹ Nathaniel Lardner (1684-1768), see 6 Dec 1770.

¹⁰ Jacques Basnage (1653-1723), Calvinist theologian and church historian [ODCC], author of *Histoire des Juifs* (Rotterdam, 1706; Eng. Trans., 1708).

¹¹ Rutt: strangely [Rutt, I, ii, 19].

¹² Priestley, *An History of Early Opinions Concerning Jesus Christ, compiled from Original Writers; proving that the Christian Church was at First Unitarian*, 4 vols. (Birmingham, 1786).

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would [text missing] Without this he will [text missing] me anything for its [text missing]

I hope you [text missing] remarks on [text missing] preceding. The work will be the better, and I shall not be offended. I am apt to be too hasty. It is my constitutional failing, and I want a check.

I inclose a letter and a book from the Duke of Grafton,¹³ which I thought you would like to see. Please to return to them. It is the only intercourse I ever had with them. I wrote a civil answer to his letter, and recommended to his notice the Life [text missing] of my Letter for the Gent-
[text missing]

P.S. I am happy to hear of your getting the better of your fever. Take care of yourself.

¹³ Augustus Henry FitzRoy, third duke of Grafton (1735-1811), see 5 Feb 1789.