

43 To THEOPHILUS LINDSEY, 14 May 1789

MS: Dr. Williams's Library, MS. 12.12, f. 86-87

PRINTED: Rutt, I, ii, pp. 25-26

ADDRESS: The Rev^d Mr Lindsey Essex Street London

POSTMARK: Birmingham, May 15 1789

ENDORSEMENT: May 14 1789

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Dear friend

I thank you for the account of the business of friday last, and rejoice that it was so favourable to us.¹ None of us, I imagine, expected that we should have a majority of votes. Mr Fox² must, I think, recover his popularity with the Dissenters, and Mr Pitt³ must certainly lose ground with them. W Vaughan⁴ says there were 30 new votes. If so, I should hope that we shall carry the point in the house of Commons the next time we apply. I shall be glad to see the Paper you talk of sending us, especially if it contain a good account of Mr Pitt's speech, tho I have no thought of animadverting upon it. I hope, however, that something will be written by some other person (and in my opinion another letter to him would be as proper as any) on the ~~2~~ occasion. I have not yet seen Mr Toulmin's Letter to the 9 Bishops,⁵ which Mr Johnson⁶ should have sent me long ago. I wish also that when you see him you would ask him whether he has not another parcell for me.⁷ Mr Walker⁸ says he has sent me his MS Travels to Fran[ce]⁹ and I imagine it must be thru his hands. As I am a little anxious about this business, in which Mr Walker is much interested, I shall be much obliged to you if you will inform him, by the penny post, that I have not received his MS, and wish that he would inquire about it. (Mr Adam Walker George Street Hanover Square)

I shall get the n^o of Plans¹⁰ you want print[ed] the first opportunity, and send you them. I cannot by any means enter into your idea of absolute secrecy in this business, which, after all, if we apply for any assistance, cannot be kept secret. What is printed

¹ On 8 May 1789 Henry Beaufoy had presented the Dissenters' repeal motion to the Commons for the second time. Beaufoy's Unitarian colleague William Smith defended the motion against Lord North, and Fox, in support of the motion, had advocated the line of reasoning taken by Priestley in *The Importance and Extent of Free Enquiry* that no government had the right to enquire into private opinions. Although Pitt broadly agreed with Fox, he could not concede the emoluments and offices of a government which had set up an established church to be given to those people who were unfriendly to it. The second appeal vote was narrowly lost by 124 votes to 104. [Helen Braithwaite, *Romanticism, Publishing and Dissent: Joseph Johnson and the Cause of Liberty* (Hampshire: Palgrave, 2003), 89-90].

² Charles James Fox (1749-1806), politician [ODNB].

³ William Pitt (1759-1806), see 14 Jul 1787.

⁴ William Vaughan (1752-1850), see 27 Jul 1787.

⁵ Joshua Toulmin, *A Letter to the Bishops, on the Application of the Protestant Dissenters, to Parliament, for a Repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts. Including Strictures in some Passages in the Bishop of Gloucester's Sermon, on January 30, 1788* (London, 1789).

⁶ Joseph Johnson (1738-1809), see 18 Jan 1770.

⁷ The previous two sentences are omitted from Rutt's edition.

⁸ Adam Walker (1730/31-1821). Walker was an itinerant lecturer and writer, whose interest in mechanics had brought him into contact with the Lunar Society [ODNB].

⁹ See Adam Walker, *Ideas, Suggested on the Spot in a Late Excursion through Flanders, Germany, France, and Italy* (London: J. Robson and J. Johnson, 1790).

¹⁰ For a new translation of the Bible.

does not say that it is to be executed, and no names appear, and in my opinion much more good than harm will accrue from such Reports as may be expected to get abroad on the subject. It will shew that we are in earnest, and will not put it into any mans power to frustrate the scheme. If we expect to publish the work, and have it actually circulate, so as to be of any use, without its ~~use~~ being pretty well known who are the principals, or at least [that] you and myself are concerned in it, w[e shall] deceive ourselves. I have sent the Plan to [Mr] Bretland¹¹ and Mr Toulmin,¹² and have no thought of sending to any body else at present. But I think Mr Cappe¹³ should be informed of it, and his assistance in some form or other asked. That I leave to you. I only endeavour to get some assistance in the part that I have undertaken, but do not expect much.

You say nothing about M^r Belsham,¹⁴ and the Academy or the time of your visit to us

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

J Priestley.

P.S. I want //two// copies of my 1st and 2^d Paper¹⁵ lately printed for the Philosophical Transactions, in order to the new edition of all my ~~Exp~~ volumes of Experiments.¹⁶ Perhaps D^r Price¹⁷ and some other of my friends may spare their copies. Ask any of them that you happen to meet.

¹¹ Joseph Bretland (1742-1819), Presbyterian minister and schoolmaster [ODNB].

¹² Joshua Toulmin (1740-1815), see 9 Mar 1789.

¹³ Newcome Cappe (1733-1800), see 30 May 1770.

¹⁴ Thomas Belsham (1750-1829), see 3 Apr 1789.

¹⁵ Priestley, 'Additional Experiments and Observations relating to the Principle of Acidity, the Decomposition of Water, and Phlogiston', *Phil. Trans.*, LXXVIII (1788); 'Objections to the Experiments and Observations relating to the Principle of Acidity, the Composition of Water, and Phlogiston, considered; with Farther Experiments and Observations on the Same Subject', *Phil. Trans.*, LXXIX (1789).

¹⁶ Priestley, *Experiments and Observations on Different Kinds of Air, and other Branches of Natural Philosophy, connected with the Subject*, 3 vols. (Birmingham, 1790).

¹⁷ Richard Price (1723-1791), see 18 Dec 1769.