

57 To THEOPHILUS LINDSEY, 4 December 1789

MS: Dr. Williams's Library, MS. 12.12, f. 115-116

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ADDRESS: The Rev^d Mr Lindsey Essex Street London

Birm. Dec^{br}. 4. 1789

Dear friend

I send, but with fear and trembling, my Letters to Bp Horsley,¹ as many things are added since you saw them. However, I have done my best. The motto's² you will disapprove, but Mr Hawkes³ and Mr Berington⁴ like them, and as this is //probably// the last, the whole will now, in that respect, be uniform. Nothing is so vague as taste. If the argumentative part be right, the rest signifies but little. No two men see other things in the same light; and every mans own taste in these things changes. I am sure mine often does, and in a short time.

As to my History,⁵ I am sure I attend more to the style, than I used to do in my former publications, so that if it be faulty in this respect, I cannot help it. I never used to read the proofs from the press more than once. I now read them, as carefully as I can, twice. As to the authorities, I also used my best judgment, and never spared my labour except where it would have been thrown away, and therefore might be better employed. If I pursue the history, it must be less from Original writers, because I neither have them, nor can I possibly get them. But no history of any extent can be written ~~except~~ ~~?~~ //strictly// from originals. ~~?~~ A man must confine his views to a small compass indeed, if he do that; and yet there are many useful compilations. One of church history is particularly wanted

You raise my curiosity to the highest pitch about D^r Price's Sermon.⁶

Mr Croft's printed Letter⁷ is not controversial, but complementary, and on that account not politic. It requires no notice at all.

We are printing Mr H-d's tract.⁸ I have corrected one sheet, the same form &c with my Defences.⁹

¹ Samuel Horsley (1733-1808), see 17 May 1786.

² From *Buchanni Franciscanus*.

³ William Hawkes (1731-1796), see 5 Jul 1786.

⁴ Joseph Berington (1743-1827), see 29 Jun 1788.

⁵ Priestley, *A General History of the Christian Church, to the Fall of the Western Empire*, 2 vols. (Birmingham, 1790).

⁶ Richard Price, *A Discourse on the Love of our Country, delivered on Nov. 4, 1789, at the Meeting-House in the Old Jewry, to the Society for commemorating the Revolution in Great Britain* (London, 1789).

⁶ Priestley, *The Conduct to be observed by Dissenters in order to procure the Repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts, recommended in a Sermon, preached before the Congregations of the Old and New Meetings, at Birmingham, November 5, 1789* (Birmingham, 1790).

⁷ Herbert Croft (1751-1816), see 18 Nov 1789.

⁸ Samuel Heywood, *The Right of Protestant Dissenters to a Compleat Toleration asserted; containing an Historical Account of the Test Laws, and showing the Injustice, Inexpediency, and Folly of the Sacramental Test, as now imposed, with respect to Protestant Dissenters, with an Answer to the Objection to the Act of Union with Scotland* (London, 1789), second edn.

⁹ Priestley, *Defences of Unitarianism for the Years 1788 & 1789* (Birmingham, 1790).

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The principal clergyman in this town¹⁰ has been preaching against the repeal of the Test Acts &c. The Committee of the Dissenters will request him to print his Sermon.¹¹

M^{rs} Priestley continues pretty well. The child is quite recovered. We are concerned at the return of those grievous pains in M^{rs} Lindsey's face.

In haste,

yours & M^{rs} Lindsey's

most affectionately

J Priestley

P.S. I trouble you with some parcels

¹⁰ Spencer Madan (1758-1836), Church of England clergyman, city rector in Birmingham (1787-1809) [ODNB].

¹¹ In 1790 Madan published his *The Principal Claims of the Dissenters, considered, in a Sermon preached at St. Philip's Church, in Birmingham, on Sunday the 14th of February, 1790* (Birmingham, 1790). Rutt's text ends here.