

70 To THEOPHILUS LINDSEY, 9 May 1790

MS: Dr. Williams's Library, MS. 12.12, f. 142-143

PRINTED: Rutt, I, ii, p. 63

ADDRESS: The Rev^d Mr Lindsey Essex Street London

POSTMARK: May 10 1790

ENDORSEMENT: May. 9. 1790

Birm. May 9. 1790

Dear friend

Yes On Friday about noon I thank God I arrived safe at my habitation, where I found my wife tolerably well, and every thing else¹ as well as I could expect. She has had much plague about the servants, and I fear that evil will not easily be remedied. Mr Wilkinson² left us yesterday morning, without saying anything about his brother,³ of which I was glad. I hope they may be able to settle their affairs between themselves, and I am the last person that ought to interpose.⁴

I have heard very little about the dispute with the clergy, my wife not troubling herself much about the matter. Some, however, of the church party boast of Mr Burn's⁵ last Letter⁶ as unanswerable. But there must be more sense among some of them. In the course of the week I propose to write the 5th and last N^o of my Familiar Letters,⁷ and then I shall stick close to our translation, the effect of which I contemplate with much satisfaction. The approaching war,⁸ I fear, will draw off some part of the attention that would have been given to those subjects; but every thing, we cannot doubt, has its uses in the great plan of providence, and the same ~~?~~ end may be brought about by very different means.

Mr Robinson,⁹ I hear, is writing something more particularly pointed ag^t the church of England. Indeed, I cannot help thinking that the ~~?~~ eyes of men in this country ought to be opened to the gross abuses of it, more, in several respects, than those that now prevail in Popish countries, in consequence of which it appears to me that the lower, officiating, clergy are more respected there than they are here.

I have not seen Joseph,¹⁰ his uncle¹¹ going to Bradly perhaps detains him there. I hope some settlement will be made to his advantage after some time.¹²

¹ Rutt: also [Rutt, I, ii, 63].

² ? John Wilkinson (1728-1808), see 17 May 1786.

³ ? William Wilkinson (1744-1808), see 27 Jul 1787.

⁴ Excepting the first sentence, this paragraph is omitted from Rutt's edition.

⁵ Edward Burn (1762-1838), see 11 Mar 1790.

⁶ ? Edward Burn, *Letters to the Rev. Dr. Priestley, in Vindication of those already addressed to him, on the Infallibility of the Apostolic Testimony, concerning the Person of Christ* (Birmingham, 1790).

⁷ Priestley, *Familiar letters, addressed to the Inhabitants of Birmingham. Part V* (Birmingham, 1790).

⁸ In the early 1790s Spain had seized property settled by the British subject John Meares on Nootka Island, leading to a confrontation between Spain and Britain known as the Nootka Crisis which threatened to trigger a major imperial war for control of the Pacific.

⁹ ? Robert Robinson (1735-1790), see 26 Aug 1787.

¹⁰ Joseph Priestley jnr. (1768-1863), see 12 Oct 1789.

¹¹ John Wilkinson (1728-1808), see 17 May 1786.

¹² This paragraph is omitted from Rutt's edition.

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Let me know particularly the state of your health, as I cannot but be anxious about it, and every thing that concerns you. Remember us both very affectionately to M^{rs} Rayner,¹³ and other friends.

yours & M^{rs} Lindsey's

most affectionately

J Priestley

P.S. I shall go to Heath on tuesday next there being an ordination near the place on that day.

¹³ Elizabeth Rayner (d. 1800), see 17 May 1786.