

73 To THEOPHILUS LINDSEY, 27 May 1790

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ADDRESS: The Rev^d Mr Lindsey Essex Street London

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Dear friend

A friend here has suggested that the best method of refuting Theodosius¹ ie so as to derive the greatest advantage from the circumstance, will be to prosecute the author for libel. The decision of a Court of Justice, he thinks, would satisfy those who will never read anything and may prevent similar things in future. Ask Mr Lee's² opinion, and give me your own. I do not like the idea as a punishment of the author. The question is which method will do the greatest good; and the Letter in the Magazine,³ and my own Familiar Letter⁴ may do very well, tho not all that might be wished. It is, no doubt, a thing of a very atrocious nature.

On sunday I was at Dudley Lecture, and there met Mr Rowe,⁵ from Shrewsbury, who says he fears that T.L. Mason, if not others of the family will leave the meeting on the pretence of his not reading the Creed, tho it has not been read of ~~2~~ some years. The true cause he thinks to be to mortify Mr Tayleur,⁶ who was arbitrator between Mr Mason and another person, and deciding ~~ing~~/ed// ag^t him. I am glad to find that it does not much disturb Mr Tayleur, tho it [[is]] a mortifying circumstance after all that he has done for the society.

From Dudley I went to Heath, where I found all very well, and happy to hear that you and M^{rs} Lindsey were so. They desire their kindest remembrances.

Having finished, and begun to print, the last part of my Familiar Letters, I shall now sit down to the translation of the Psalms, and in a month or two shall hope to send you a specimen. I forgot to ask Mr Belsham⁷ about his progress; but it could not be much on account of his may engagements. I wish much to see his Sermon. By this time I hope Mr Wakefield⁸ and the trustees have come to some agreement, and I hope it will issue happily for all sides.

So great, the Papers say, are the [prep]arations for war on all sides, that I can hardly think the storm will blow off so easily.

With our kindest remembrances I am
yours & Mrs Lindsey's
most affectionately
J Priestley

¹ Philip Withers, *Theodosius: or a Solemn Admonition to Protestant Dissenters, on the Proposed Repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts* (London, 1790).

² John Lee (1733-1793), see Mar 1770.

³ See *Gent. Mag.*, LX (1790), 384-386.

⁴ Priestley, *Familiar Letters, addressed to the Inhabitants of Birmingham, in refutation of Several Charges, advanced against the Dissenters and Unitarians* (Birmingham, 1790).

⁵ John Rowe (1764-1832), pastor at High Street Chapel, Shrewsbury [ODNB].

⁶ William Tayleur (1713-1796), see 20 Mar 1787

⁷ Thomas Belsham (1750-1829), see 3 Apr 1789.

⁸ Gilbert Wakefield (1756-1801), see 3 Apr 1789.