

75 To THEOPHILUS LINDSEY, 21 June 1790

MS: Dr. Williams's Library, MS. 12.12, f. 152-153

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ENDORSEMENT: D^r P. June. 26. 1790.

Birm June 21. [//26//] 1790.

Dear friend

I send you with this a few copies of my Sermon for Mr Robinson,¹ to be disposed of as presents to whom you please. Do not forget Mr Radcliffe.² None will be sold in London, or Cambridge, till it has been seen [[by]] the family, and they allow the account given of Mr Robinson.³ There can be no doubt of his change of sentiment whether it should appear in his writings or not. He had been a cautious man, and ~~did~~ forbore to announce his change of opinion to his congregation; but I hope he never deceived them. The letter in the Preface is Mr Curtis's⁴ his son in law the same that called upon you. There was however something I cannot account for with respect to his former opinion of the divinity of Christ, unless he held the indwelling scheme. For he said in my hearing he always thought the doctrine of the trinity an absurdity. On this supposition however I cannot vindicate his writing that book.⁵ I hear he was uncommonly eager to read your reply.⁶ It was brought by Mr Curtis before your present of it arrived, and he sat up all night to read it, and was much agitated by it. He was also more affected than he ought to have been by the reception he met with among his old friends after his change of opinion was known. When Mr Hilson[?]⁷ who was an old acquaintance of his first saw him he said They have killed me, and he complained to me that among all his former friends in London he had only two subscribers to his book. He had no doubt been too fond of popularity, which is too often the case with those who have the power of being so. However, his well known change of sentiment cannot fail to have a considerable effect.

I was much pleased with my journey to Nottingham. The meeting was harmonious, a number of good resolutions passed, and a letter was agreed on, which will soon be printed. Among other things the regium donum⁸ was properly mentioned.

I was very much pleased with Mr Wakefield,⁹ he appeared so very different from what one would imagine from his writings. We were always together. I really think his situation at Hackney will be very favourable to the academy.

¹ Priestley, *Reflections on Death. A Sermon, on Occasion of the Death of the Rev. Robert Robinson* (Birmingham, 1790).

² Ebenezer Radcliffe (1732-1809), see 18 Nov 1789.

³ Robert Robinson (1735-1790), see 11 Jun 1790.

⁴ William Curtis, see George Dyer, *Memoirs of the Life and Writings of Robert Robinson, Late Minister of the Dissenting Congregation, in Saint Andrews Parish, Cambridge* (London, 1796), 209; *Reflections on Death* (1790), v-viii.

⁵ Robert Robinson, *A Plea for the Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ* (Cambridge, 1776).

⁶ Theophilus Lindsey, *An Examination of Mr. Robinson of Cambridge's Plea for the Divinity of our Lord Jesus Christ* (London, 1785).

⁷ unidentified.

⁸ Literally 'royal gift', an annual grant made from public funds to Presbyterian ministers in Ireland and to nonconformist ministers in Great Britain.

⁹ Gilbert Wakefield (1756-1801), see 3 Apr 1789.

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The Psalms and Hymns¹⁰ will not be ready till the end of the week; but I shall then send you a few copies, and one for Mr Poter.¹¹ What we shall have to spare I cannot tell, but shall soon know.¹²

You will see by the inclosed that Mr Robinson had many persons much attached to him

I shall write again before the end of the week. Yours & M^{rs} Lindsey's
most affectionately

J Priestley.

P.S. I have been more than ever alarmed for my ~~wife~~ wife. Her cough, and other consumptive symptoms being much increased //her blood [-?-] &c//. At present however they are abated. I am concerned to hear of the death of D^r Blackburne's child.¹³

P.S. I shall be much obliged to you if you will inquire whether my Philosophical work has been sent to Mr Constable,¹⁴ and others[.] Coming thru Derby I found that Mr Strutt,¹⁵ had it not, nor D^r Darwin.¹⁶ I have sent them from this place to day. Mr Johnson¹⁷ I fear has been very careless. But I must not tell him so I have written to him by the post today.

¹⁰ *Psalms and Hymns for the use of the New Meeting in Birmingham* (Birmingham, 1790).

¹¹ ? Thomas Porter, minister at Portsmouth (1789-1794), a correspondent of Lindsey.

¹² This paragraph is omitted from Rutt's edition.

¹³ William Blackburne (1705-1787), see 4 May 1789. This paragraph is omitted from Rutt's edition.

¹⁴ William Constable, see 27 Jul 1787.

¹⁵ William Strutt (1756-1830), cotton manufacturer [ODNB].

¹⁶ Erasmus Darwin (1731-1802), physician and natural philosopher [ODNB].

¹⁷ Joseph Johnson (1738-1809), see 18 Jan 1770.