

109 To THEOPHILUS LINDSEY, 30 August 1791

MS: Dr. Williams's Library, MS. 12.12, f. 218-219

PRINTED: Rutt, I, ii, pp. 149-151.

ADDRESS: The Rev^d Mr Lindsey at Sam Shore's Esq Norton Hall near Sheffield Yorkshire.

POSTMARK: Missendon, Sept. 01 1791.

ENDORSEMENT: D^r P. Aug: 30: 1791

Missendon Aug. 30. 1791

Dear friend

I never wanted you more than I do now that I am composing my Appeal.¹ It is about the size of my Letters to Mr Burke,² and I think finished, except the fair transcript for the press. I have thought it right to speak with great freedom on many subjects, because I am pretty sure to be heard. At the same time, I wish to be on my guard not to pass the bounds of decency and propriety, and in this your cooler temper, and better knowledge of the world, would be of the greatest use to me. However, I shall not print any part of it till you have seen it. Mr Russell³ and my friends in general wish that I would not defer the publication unnecessarily, and therefore I shall be ready. Not to offend the clergy and the court, is impossible, and therefore that is no object with me. Whatever justifies us, will of course condemn, and therefore irritate, them. It is not doubted by any body that I converse with that the measure originated with the Court itself, and that the design was to intimidate and quiet us, by shewing us our absolute dependance upon them. Mr Russell owns that he ~~he~~ never had less satisfaction in any interview with Mr Pitt⁴ than the last. He says he clearly saw he had received unfavourable impressions of ~~it~~ us; and to Mr Wiche⁵ and the others from Maidstone, Mr Dundas⁶ expressed great dislike of the Dissenters in general, and myself in particular, saying they were a different set of persons from the old Dissenters, and did not know what they wanted. Mr Russell declined sending them any more affidavit's, perceiving clearly that those he had sent would not be used in our favour. He says he clearly foresees more rioting in Birm and the neighbourhood, and that the foot soldiers would not act ag^t the rioters tho' he thinks the horse would. He wishes the ministry would withdraw all the foot, as likely to do more harm than good. He is getting arms into his own //house// and means openly to train his servants to the use of them, and to advise all his friends to do the same. He never goes abroad without a brace of charged pistols in his pocket. By all accounts the spirit of party is higher than ever, and is likely to increase for some time. It is indeed, a sad prospect that is now before us. But we must not despair, or discover any timidity. I rather fear going into the opposite extreme; which, however, I think is the better of the two. – I came hither yesterday, and am very comfortable, but too far out of the way of intelligence and letters. I am quite recovered of my indisposition. I hear

¹ Priestley, *An Appeal to the Public, on the Subject of the Riots in Birmingham. To which are added, Strictures on a Pamphlet, intituled 'Thoughts on the Late Riot at Birmingham'* (Birmingham, 1791).

² Priestley, *Letters to the Right Honourable Edmund Burke, occasioned by his Reflections on the Revolution in France &c.* (Birmingham, 1791).

³ William Russell (1740-1818), see 5 Jul 1786.

⁴ William Pitt (1759-1806), see 14 May 1789.

⁵ John Wiche (1718-1794), see 27 Jul 1787.

⁶ Henry Dundas, first Viscount Melville (1742-1811), politician [ODNB].

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nothing but good from Heath, and find Sally⁷ is expected to be delivered dayly. After that I intend to go to Castle //head//; but my wife does not seem disposed to accompany me thither, but will come hither. I doubt ~~not~~ whether I can wait your coming. But I will leave one copy of my Appeal for you. I beg to be particularly remembered to Mr Shore⁸ and all the family, and am yours & M^{rs} Lindsey's most affectionately

J Priestley

P.S. As to the Political Unbelievers you mention. I expect no allowance from them. They have long been more offended at me than (if possible) the clergy themselves.

⁷ Sarah (Sally) Priestley (1761-1803), see 5 July 1786.

⁸ Samuel Shore (1738-1828), see 26 Aug 1787.