

14 To THEOPHILUS LINDSEY, 2 March 1772

MS: Dr. Williams's Library, MS. 12.12, f. 34-35
PRINTED: Rutt, I, i, 159-161

Leeds 2 March 1772.

Dear Sir

I do not desire to be informed of the reason of your late silence, as I doubt [[not]] it was a very good one, and I have not the least inclination to hear anything of the nature of a secret. I shall be very happy, however, in any opportunity of seeing, and conversing with you, especially on the subject of your late application to Parliament, and your present prospects.¹ I most sincerely wish you success, and hope that what you are doing cannot fail to ~~to~~ //produce// good effects. You must permit us Dissenters, however, ~~to~~ who are not used to the idea even of spiritual superiors, to smile at your scheme as an application to the powers of this world for a reformation in the business of religion. As the disciple of a master whose kingdom is not of this world, I should be ashamed to ask any thing of temporal powers, except more peace and quietness, which, being, temporal blessings, they may bestow; but I should be sorry to make any application to them, which should imply an acknowledgement of their having other kind of power. The more I think of an application to such a house of Commons, or such a parliament as ours, on the subject of religion, the more does the absurdity of it strike me. But I shall say no more on this subject, lest I should offend you. I really did not mean to say so much.

As I find you are at home, I send your Copy of my History² and Mr ~~Dr~~ Blackburne's³ by the next Waggon to Catterick, and wish to be informed how I must dispose of Sir M Wyvill's,⁴ Mr Joy's⁵ and M^{rs} Hargill's,⁶ which you procured for me – Tho', as some of them may be your neighbours, I think I had better not send any till I hear from you, which I beg may be soon.⁷ On Tuesday sennight i.e. the 10th Ins^t. I set out for London where I shall stay five weeks (at Johnsons).⁸

[Mr Hazlitt⁹ says concerning the Archdeacon, "You may assure him from me, if you will, that my intelligence came neither directly nor indirectly from you. I had it first from a gentleman in the West, and afterwards from many others; so many indeed, that I supposed it to be universally known."

¹ The campaign mounted by Lindsey, Blackburne and others dedicated to the abolition of compulsory subscription to the Thirty-Nine Articles. The petition had been rejected by the House of Commons on 6 February 1772. For an overview of the topic see G. M. Ditchfield, 'Feathers tavern petitioners (act. 1771–1774)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, online edn.

² ? Priestley, *The History and Present State of Discoveries relating to Vision, Light, and Colours* (London, 1772).

³ ? Francis Blackburne (1705-1787), see 18 Dec 1769.

⁴ Sir Marmaduke Asty Wyvill (d. 1804), owner of Constable Burton Hall, Yorkshire.

⁵ Thomas Joy (d. 1799), graduate of St John's College, Cambridge, curate of Smeaton, Yorkshire in 1760, and vicar of Grinton, Yorkshire, 1783-99.

⁶ unidentified.

⁷ The preceding paragraph is omitted from Rutt's edition.

⁸ Joseph Johnson (1738-1809), see 18 Jan 1770.

⁹ William Hazlitt (1737-1820), Unitarian minister and author [ODNB].

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If you will be so good as to transmit the above few lines to the Archdeacon, it will save me the trouble of writing to him, which, as our correspondence seems to be closed, would not be agreeable, I believe, to him.]¹⁰

I think he has used me ill, and very unworthy of the frankness with which I have always treated him. But this is a subject that must be disagreeable to you, and therefore I beg you would neither write, nor think about it.¹¹ – I beg your acceptance of the two things inclosed, which, I hope, will come safe by the York Newsman. – You may pay the subscription money to Mr Cappe¹² of York, or wait for //an// opportunity of sending it some other way. My wife joins me respectful compliments to yourself & M^{rs} Lindsey. I am Dear Sir yours sincerely

J Priestley

¹⁰ Some text in the MS version is missing. The preceding two paragraphs in square brackets are from Rutt's edition [Rutt, I, i, 161].

¹¹ The preceding two sentences are omitted from Rutt's edition.

¹² Newcome Cappe (1733-1800), see 30 May 1770.