

28 To THEOPHILUS LINDSEY, 14 July 1787

MS: Dr. Williams's Library, MS. 12.12, f. 58-59

PRINTED: Rutt, I, i, pp. 411-413

ADDRESS: The Rev<sup>d</sup> Mr Lindsey Essex Street London

ENDORSEMENT: D<sup>r</sup>. P June 17: 1787

[July 14. 1787]

Dear friend

I have been rather unfortunate twice together, in sending parcels which arrived just after you had set out on a weeks excursion. In neither case, however, was it of much consequence. By this time I hope you have received my Second set of Letters to the Jews,<sup>1</sup> with the account of the presents of them. Add any others that may occur to you, and please to send one to Mr Maseres.<sup>2</sup>

As Mr Nicholls<sup>3</sup> has obliged me by inserting my letter, I send him the inclosed, which, if you please, you may send him. I have no objection to his knowing that they come from me; but I would not have him print my name on the occasion. I send you the Originals, which you will please to return. If it will gratify Mr Nicholls, they may be shewn to him, or any of his friends.

I thank you much for Mr. Christie's<sup>4</sup> letter, and am glad that he gives so good an account of Mr Palmer,<sup>5</sup> whose letter to me, I think I inclosed in my last. I hope things are ripening to some good issue; but, in the present state of things, time is requisite. If the establishment were out of the way, unitarianism would have a rapid spread.

Mr Madan,<sup>6</sup> I see, has published some Letters to me.<sup>7</sup> Perhaps he will send them to me. I see another piece from a country parson.<sup>8</sup> If these, or any others be worth my notice, I hope you will inform me.

I have so much to do in printing, that I shall not be able to leave B—m these three months. After this I shall perhaps take a ride with Mr Russell<sup>9</sup> to Bristol and South

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<sup>1</sup> Priestley, *Letters to the Jews. Part II. Occasioned by Mr. David Levi's Reply to the Former Letters* (Birmingham, 1787).

<sup>2</sup> Francis Maseres (1731-1824), colonial administrator and author [ODNB]. Maseres published a number of treatises on subjects such as trigonometry, logarithms, and algebra, which Priestley declared were 'original and excellent' [Rutt I, ii, 490].

<sup>3</sup> John Nichols (1745-1826), editor of the *Gentleman's Magazine* [ODNB].

<sup>4</sup> William Christie (1750-1823), Unitarian minister and writer [ODNB].

<sup>5</sup> Thomas Fyshe Palmer (1747-1802). In November 1783 Palmer reached Montrose, and the Unitarian society founded there by William Christie, and remained as Christie's colleague until May 1785. At that date he moved to Dundee to become pastor of a new Unitarian congregation there. At the same time he preached frequently in Edinburgh, Glasgow, Arbroath, and Forfar, and formed Unitarian societies in all these places. In 1789 Palmer took temporary charge of the society at Newcastle [A. H. Millar, 'Palmer, Thomas Fyshe (1747-1802)', rev. G. M. Ditchfield, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004, online edn.].

<sup>6</sup> Martin Madan (1725-1790), Church of England clergyman [ODNB].

<sup>7</sup> Martin Madan, *Letters to Joseph Priestley, LL.D. F.R.S. occasioned by his Late Controversial Writings* (London, 1787).

<sup>8</sup> *A Letter to the Rev. Dr. Priestley, on the Subject of his Late Letters to the Dean of Canterbury, the Young Men of both Universities, and Others. By One who is not LL.D. F.R.S. ... but a Country Parson* (Bath, 1787).

<sup>9</sup> William Russell (1740-1818), see 5 Jul 1786.

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Wales, to call upon my son Harry,<sup>10</sup> who will be with Mr Estlin,<sup>11</sup> and to see Mr Morris,<sup>12</sup> //–?// who has written to me twice to desire that something may be done to establish an unitarian interest at Swansea, where he lives. I do not fancy the man. But Mr Russell thinks favourably of him. He proposes to give a hundred pounds towards building a place of worship. Perhaps on finding that things are not yet ripe for that, he may do something in another way. Mr Russell is intent on getting a –?– subscription to support the cause in general, and will cheerfully give twenty pounds a year, or more, if it be wanted.

I have sent for the pamphlet you recommend written by the Arian – I am glad to hear of the bequest to M<sup>rs</sup> Jebb,<sup>13</sup> and that my letter to Mr Pitt<sup>14</sup> is approved by any. I suspect I shall be a considerable loser by it, perhaps in consequence of saying “I did not want any thing that the minister could do for me.” But this does not make me repent of what I did.

I am very busy in my experiments, tho I am not doing any thing of particular consequence. To amuse me, I read Thuanus,<sup>15</sup> and I shall set about the Ecclesiastical History<sup>16</sup> in good earnest as soon as I have gone over my Lectures on History<sup>17</sup> once more, to finish them for the press.

I should have been very happy to have spent the week with you at M<sup>rs</sup> Rayners.<sup>18</sup> [But] we cannot always be where we wish. [If] you and M<sup>rs</sup> Lindsey should make an excursion this way, you would make us very happy. My wife is pretty well, but troubled with an eruption on her chin.

I am, Dear friend,  
yours & M<sup>rs</sup> Lindsey's  
most affectionately  
J Priestley

Birm.  
14 July 1787.

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<sup>10</sup> Henry (Harry) Priestley (b. 1777), see 5 July 1786.

<sup>11</sup> John Prior Estlin (1747-1817), Unitarian minister. In 1787 Estlin was junior colleague to the Revd Thomas Wright of Lewin's Mead Chapel, Bristol and conducted a school in St Michael's Hill [ODNB].

<sup>12</sup> unidentified.

<sup>13</sup> Ann Jebb [née Torkington] (1735-1812), wife of John Jebb (1736-1786) [ODNB].

<sup>14</sup> Priestley, *A Letter to the Right Honourable William Pitt, First Lord of the Treasury and Chancellor of the Exchequer, on the Subjects of Toleration and Church Establishments; occasioned by his Speech against the Repeal of the Test and Corporation Acts on Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> March, 1787* (London, 1787).

<sup>15</sup> Jacques Auguste de Thou [Thuanus] (1553-1617), historian and book-collector [ODCC], author of *Historia sui Temporis* (1604-1608), *De re Accipitraria* (1784), a Life, in Latin, of Papyre Masson, and some *Poemata Sacra*.

<sup>16</sup> Joseph Priestley, *A General History of the Christian Church, to the Fall of the Western Empire*, 2 vols. (Birmingham, 1790).

<sup>17</sup> Priestley, *Lectures on History, and General Policy; to which is prefixed, an Essay on a Course of Liberal Education for Civil and Active Life* (Birmingham, 1788); reissued London, 1793.

<sup>18</sup> Elizabeth Rayner (d. 1800), see 17 May 1786.