

83 To THEOPHILUS LINDSEY, 30 September 1790

MS: Dr. Williams's Library, MS. 12.12, f. 165-166

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ADDRESS: The Rev^d Mr Lindsey Essex Street London

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ENDORSEMENT: D^r P-y Leeds. Sept. 30. 1790

[Leeds Sep. 30. 1790]

Dear friend

I was very happy to hear from you, and, as I stay here till monday, and probably tuesday or wednesday next, I hope to have that satisfaction once more before I leave this place. Mr Dawson¹ talks of going to Bristol and London by Birmingham, and if so, we shall stay a few days longer for him, and then take a chaise together. At all events we shall not go before monday

Presently after my last was sent off, I heard the melancholy fate of M^{rs} Russell² from his brother,³ and another relation. We were at Buxton when it happened, and the accident was much talked of, but no names were known, and we little imagined that they were in that part of the country. M^{rs} Russell will be much missed indeed, but the manner of her death will, no doubt, make the event much more distressing, and I much fear it will be aggravated by Mr Russell blaming himself. It is said here that every body there remonstrated against his driving so young a horse as he had got for the chaise.⁴ His brother, however, says that they all bear the affliction better than could have been expected. It must, however, be severely felt. I immediately wrote to him, but hastening home on the account would answer no material purpose, and his brother desires I would not think of it.

I had Mr Shore⁵ to hear me on sunday last, when I preached the same sermon that I composed at ~~2~~ Buxton. He and most others seem much struck with it. I had transcribed it with some additions, to make it two. If you please, I will send it to you after my return. Mr Simpson⁶ requested the reading of it, and now has it. I have just received, in a parcell from Birm.— Mr Belsham's Charge. I am sorry that the printing must be deferred till my return.⁷ No time, however, shall be lost after that.⁸

¹ ? Obadiah Dawson, brother of Benjamin Dawson (1729-1814), a merchant in Leeds and a member of Priestley's congregation [Rutt, I, i, 168].

² Martha Russell [née Twamley] (1741-1790), wife of William Russell (1740-1818). Martha Russell had died on 1 September 1790, see S. H. Jeyes, *The Russells of Birmingham in the French Revolution and in America 1791-1814* (London: George Allen, 1911), 5.

³ ? George Russell.

⁴ This sentence and the second part of the preceding are omitted from Rutt's edition.

⁵ Samuel Shore (1738-1828), see 26 Aug 1787.

⁶ John Simpson (1746-1812), see 12 Oct 1789.

⁷ See Priestley, *A View of Revealed Religion; a Sermon, preached at the Ordination of the Rev. William Field of Warwick, July 12, 1790. With a Charge, delivered at the same time, by the Rev. Thomas Belsham* (Birmingham, 1790).

⁸ This paragraph is omitted from Rutt's edition.

Mr Wood's⁹ congregation is in a fine state containing many young people, to whom he gives proper attention. He has not, however, such zealous seconds as I have in Mr Russell.¹⁰ He cannot establish a library, tho' he has attempted it. Mr. Turner,¹¹ who was with us yesterday, is perfe[ctly][?] imbecile, body and mind. He ought to h[ave] desisted from preaching long ago.¹² Last sunday they had a candidate for the office of his assistant, Mr Johnson,¹³ sent down by Mr Belsham,¹⁴ who is likely to be accepted. The congregation I hear is thin but those at Halifax, and Bradford, reduced almost to nothing, while the methodists &c increase wonderfully. But the ministers want zeal, and pay no attention to the young.

This journey, to all appearance, will be of great service to me, and my wife too, as well as be some furtherance to the good cause. But I wish to be at ho[me] at my translation and other pursuits. I admire Mr Wood very much. He has in hand an excellent work on the Old Testament, which he executed in his lectures to the young people. I persuade him to publish it. With my wife's best respects

yours & M^{rs} Lindsey's
most affectionately
J Priestley

P.S. Please to send copies of the Familiar Letters¹⁵ to Mr Thompson,¹⁶ who lent me the curious book¹⁷ mentioned in the Preface to Mr Shore and Mr Dodson.¹⁸

⁹ William Wood (1745-1808), Unitarian minister and botanist. In 1772, at the age of twenty-six, Wood had succeeded Priestley at Leeds on the joint recommendation of Price and Priestley. He preached as a candidate on 10 January 1773 and began his ministry on 30 May. He remained there until his death nearly thirty-five years later [David L. Wykes, 'Wood, William (1745-1808)', *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004, online edn.].

¹⁰ William Russell (1740-1818), see 5 July 1786.

¹¹ William Turner (1714-1794), see Mar 1770. Turner was minister at the Westgate Chapel, Wakefield from 1761 until July 1792 [Alexander Gordon, 'Turner, William (1714-1794)', rev. John Goodchild, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004, online edn.].

¹² The preceding two sentences are substituted for 'Mr. Turner was with us yesterday' in Rutt's edition.

¹³ Thomas Johnstone, appointed as Wakefield's assistant in 1790, and his successor in 1792.

¹⁴ Thomas Belsham (1750-1829), see 3 Apr 1789.

¹⁵ Priestley, *Familiar Letters, addressed to the Inhabitants of Birmingham* (Birmingham, 1790).

¹⁶ Josiah Thompson (c. 1724-1806), see 18 Aug 1790.

¹⁷ See 18 Aug 1790.

¹⁸ Michael Dodson (1737-1799), see 27 Nov 1787.