

101 To THEOPHILUS LINDSEY, 24 February 1791

MS: Dr. Williams's Library, MS. 12.12, f. 203-204
ADDRESS: The Rev^d Mr Lindsey Essex Street London
POSTMARK: Birmingham, Feb 25 1791
ENDORSEMENT: Ans^d. Feb. 26. 1791.

[Feb 24. 91]

Dear friend

Had you condemned the Sermon¹ at once, I should have thought no more of it, but as you did not dislike it much at first, you may come to wish I had preached it. I own I am now rather inclined to be my own advocate, especially as I do not see the force of my own original objections, in the strong light that I then did, and in that in which you now see them. As to giving offence, it will not be remedied, if it † [[be]] worth remedying (which I think it is not) by silence. I have //heard// so much of the offence I have given by my Letters to Mr Burke,² that as I intirely approve of my own conduct in that business, I am perfectly indifferent to it, and even rather amused and pleased with it. Indeed, no great good was ever done with[[out]][?] risking and incurring much dislike. Besides I can easily alter many things of that kind, and introduce others.

Mr Russell³ has not seen the Sermon; but he is not previously disposed to feel with you on these occasions. He most cordially approved what you condemned, and what I suppressed, in the Letters to Mr Burke. I do not mean the 13th Letter, but another part, in which I had touched[?] in a more pointed[?] manner on his conduct in the House respecting our Bill. A little of it I retained, but he wishes I had retained much more.

However, I will not decide for myself I beg you would shew the Discourse to Mr Belsham,⁴ and let him give an impartial judgmen^t as I doubt not he will. Mr Dodson[['s]]⁵ opinion you will hardly think sufficient, or I should have no objection to your shewing it to him, remembering that it is not to be delivered as it now is, but as it may be improved, and I shall be glad to receive any hints of improvement

As to Mr Wakefield,⁶ tho his not be[ing] invited weighs with me, I cannot oblige[?] that[?] to the Committee, because it would be reflecting upon them; and Mr Belsham observed that a person who attends no public worship cannot be offended at not being asked to preach.

In great haste, but I must leave no time,
yours & M^{rs} Lindsey's
most affectionately
J Priestley

¹ Priestley, *The Proper Objects of Education in the Present State of the World: represented in a Discourse, delivered on Wednesday, April 27, 1791, at the Meeting-House in the Old-Jewry, London; to the Supporters of the New College at Hackney* (London, 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 Thomas Belsham (1750-1829), see 3 Apr 1789.

⁵ Michael Dodson (1732-1799), see 27 Nov 1787.

⁶ Gilbert Wakefield (1756-1801), see 3 Apr 1789.

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P.S. I have just read Mr Paine's⁷ pamphlet, and admire it exceedingly. I own it has made me more desirous of delivering my discourse than I ~~was~~ was before.

Joseph⁸ set off for Manchester last night. I hope a good providence will accompany him.

⁷ Thomas Paine (1737-1809), see 23 Feb 1791.

⁸ Joseph Priestley jnr. (1768-1863), see 12 Oct 1789.