

MS: Dr. Williams's Library, MS. 12.12, f. 212-213

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[Mar 14. 91]

Dear friend

I am very sorry that, by a mistake of my son's, the letter containing the Paper for the Royal Society was put into the Post Office, and not sent in Mr Russell's<sup>1</sup> packet, which went the day after. I put you to expence of postage enough without this addition.

Your letter, with the inclosure from his Grace,<sup>2</sup> came safe, and yesterday I wrote him a line of thanks. But these thanks are as much due to you, as to him; for without your kind suggestion it would not have been procured. But there would be no end of recounting my obligations to you and M<sup>rs</sup> Lindsey.

I have received the whole of my College Discourse<sup>3</sup> with your remarks, to which you may be sure I shall not fail to pay attention. Mr Dodson<sup>4</sup> also put a few, and some the same with yours. I have not heard from Mr Belsham<sup>5</sup> on the subject. I forget the day on which it is to be delivered. But I have laid my plan to leave Birm on the 11<sup>th</sup>, and stay three sundays, as usual. The next week I go to Manchester, and spend one sunday.

It has happened, very contrary to my expectations, when I wrote last, that the invitation to preach as a candidate with us is not sent to Mr Broadhurst,<sup>6</sup> but a Mr Edwards<sup>7</sup> of Gateacre near Liverpool[.] The reason was this. Mr Edwards was recommended to us some time before Mr Broadhurst, but, on inquiry, we heard something much to his prejudice, on which account we thought no more about him. I do not know that I ever mentioned his name to you. But the person who first recommended him persisting in his account, and by degrees other strong attestations of his merit £, especially from Mr Yates<sup>8</sup> of Liverpool, and Mr Shepherd<sup>9</sup> of Knowsly, in that neighbourhood, coming in, made us hesitate; but we still ~~→~~ thought we had gone too far ~~→~~ with Mr Broadhurst not to invite him in the first place. Thus things stood on Sunday morning, ~~→~~ and so the Vestry had determined. But after this we had a letter from the persons who started the objection to Mr Edwards, desiring to retract it, and acknowledging that the authority of Mr Yates in particular in favour of Mr Edwards, was greatly //superior// to any other ag<sup>t</sup> him. It was therefore said that, as the allegation against Mr Edwards was acknowledged not to be well founded, he ought not to suffer in consequence of it, and that he should be considered ~~→~~ as having a prior

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<sup>1</sup> William Russell (1740-1818), see 5 Jul 1786.

<sup>2</sup> Probably of Grafton [Rutt]. See 13 Feb 1791.

<sup>3</sup> Priestley, *The Proper Objects of Education in the Present State of the World: represented in a Discourse, delivered on Wednesday, the 27th of April, 1791, at the Meeting-House in the Old-Jewry, London; to the Supporters of the New College at Hackney* (London, 1791).

<sup>4</sup> Michael Dodson (1732-1799), see 27 Nov 1787.

<sup>5</sup> Thomas Belsham (1750-1829), see 3 Apr 1789.

<sup>6</sup> Thomas Broadhurst (1767?-1851), see 23 Feb 1791.

<sup>7</sup> John Edwards (1768-1808), minister at Gatacre Chapel, Liverpool (1787-1791), New Meeting, Birmingham (1791-1802), Old Jewry, London [CSICM 205].

<sup>8</sup> John Yates (1775-1826), see 17 Jun 1787.

<sup>9</sup> ? William Shepherd (1768-1847), Unitarian minister and politician, minister of the Unitarian chapel at Gateacre, near Liverpool.

recommendation. The charge ag<sup>t</sup> him was that he neglected his congregation, and //that// it was diminished, whereas it appears that he has attended to them in a very particular manner, and they are rather increased. But I shall get the letters to be sent to you, and they cannot fail to give you a good opinion of him.

However what impresses many of our people very much (I own I think too much) is that Mr Edwards is said to have an excellent voice, and to be a lively preacher, whereas it is impossible to satisfy many of the people //here// that Mr Broadhurst is //not// a very heavy one, so that they say, his ~~2~~ invitation would be far from being unanimous, if he did come. Mr Russell is directed to write to D<sup>r</sup> Kippis,<sup>10</sup> who first recommended Mr Broadhurst, to explain these proceedings. I fear, however, that the affair will hurt Mr Broadhurst, tho I do not see how we could have acted otherwise. I have had little to do in the business, and very fortunately I did not know either of the persons recommended.

I hope the curious Proviso<sup>11</sup> in the Bill for the Catholics will be noticed both in the House and out of it. Suppose that, on this occasion, what I have said of it in the Preface to my last Defences<sup>12</sup> were put into some public paper, or shewn to Mr Fox.<sup>13</sup> Mr Berington<sup>14</sup> says he cannot yet find out how that extraordinary clause came into their Bill, but he shall endeavour to do it, and inform me of it.

I am glad that Mr Paine's book<sup>15</sup> is to be published as it was printed, tho not by Johnson.<sup>16</sup> It will be read the more on account of the stoppage. When does Mr Christie's an<sup>17</sup> come out? or Mr Mackintosh's?<sup>18</sup>

With my wife's best respects I am  
yours & M<sup>rs</sup> Lindsey's  
most affectionately  
J Priestley

Birm March 14. 1791.

<sup>10</sup> Andrew Kippis (1725-1795), see 17 Feb 1771.

<sup>11</sup> The Bill for the extended toleration of Catholicism included a condition that 'nothing contained in this Act shall extend, to give any Ease, Benefit, or Advantage, to any Person who shall deny, in his Preaching or Writing, the Doctrine of the Blessed Trinity, as it is declared in the Articles of Religion, mentioned in the Statute of the Thirteenth Year of the Reign of Queen *Elizabeth*'. See *Original Papers, relative to the Present Application to the British Parliament for Relief of the Roman Catholics in England* (Dublin, 1791), 69.

<sup>12</sup> Priestley, *Defences of Unitarianism for the Years 1788 & 1789* (Birmingham, 1790), x-xi.

<sup>13</sup> Charles James Fox (1749-1806), see 14 May 1789.

<sup>14</sup> Joseph Berington (1743-1827), see 22 Jul 1789.

<sup>15</sup> Thomas Paine, *Rights of Man: being an Answer to Mr. Burke's Attack on the French Revolution* (London, 1791).

<sup>16</sup> Joseph Johnson (1738-1809), see 18 Jan 1770. Paine's *Rights of Man* was published by J. S. Jordan.

<sup>17</sup> Thomas Christie (1761-1796) [ODNB], *Letters on the Revolution of France, and on the New Constitution established by the National Assembly: occasioned by the Publications of the Right Hon. Edmund Burke* (London, 1791).

<sup>18</sup> James Mackintosh (1765-1832) [ODNB], *Vindiciae Gallicae. Defence of the French Revolution and its English Admirers, against the Accusations of the Right Hon. Edmund Burke* (London, 1791).