

59 To THEOPHILUS LINDSEY, 19 December 1789

MS: Dr. Williams's Library, MS. 12.12, f. 121-122

Birm. Dec^{br} 19 1789

Dear Friend

Be assured that, whatever be the expence of reprinting, the Defences¹ shall be such as you approve, if I can make them so; but really you take from me all confidence in myself, and I shall be afraid to compose at all. I am concerned to give you so much trouble and vexation, especially as they appear to me to be about things of no sort of consequence, and will hardly draw the attention of the generality of readers, and those who do attend to them will think differently. If the note p64² be thrown out, it appears to me that, for the very same reason, I ought to reject almost the whole of that Letter. At one time you seemed to like it intirely, and Mr Russell³ does above measure. I wish you would send back your copy with the alterations that you shall like, and I will either please you, or suppress the whole, tho it is now nearly printed off. I wish, however, you would shew the copy to some other persons without pointing out to them what offends you, and see whether the same things strike them in the same manner. I own I do not myself feel the force of your reasons, especially with respect to the note p 63 64, I must reprint at least a whole sheet //beside that leaf// as far as I now see, if I cancel that. Mr Hawkes⁴ objected to the former note; but then he objected to my mentioning his Newton,⁵ or anything foreign to the question in debate; so that both the first and last letters should be rejected. I do not think you will find two people who will think exactly alike on such a subject as this. My own ideas frequently change, but then it signifies very little how such things be done.

I send the remainder of the History⁶ and wish you peruse it as soon as you conveniently can – If I can send two copies, send one to M^r Belsham.⁷ I shall not publish either of the Works till ~~after Xmas or~~ January, or later, if you please.

Mr H[–]⁸ has returned the Facts⁹ with many alterations but an edition of 750 is printed off. They may do for a new edition. We kept the last sheet some time; but that was as much as we could do. We are embarrassed with the number of pieces that are

¹ Priestley, *Defences of Unitarianism for the Years 1788 & 1789* (Birmingham, 1790).

² See *Defences of Unitarianism for the Years 1788 & 1789* (1790), 64. The note contains a circular letter sent from Samuel Horsley to the clergy of his diocese advising them not to vote for John George Phillips, M.P. for Carmarthen, who had voted for going into a committee to consider of the repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts in the Commons on the 8 May 1789.

³ William Russell (1740-1818), see 5 Jul 1786.

⁴ William Hawkes (1731-1796), see 5 Jul 1786.

⁵ Samuel Horsley, *Isaaci Newtoni Opera quæ exstant Omnia*, 5 vols. (London, 1779-85). See *Defences*, 26-27.

⁶ Priestley, *A General History of the Christian Church, to the Fall of the Western Empire*, 2 vols. (Birmingham, 1790).

⁷ Thomas Belsham (1750-1829), see 3 Apr 1789.

⁸ ? Samuel Heywood (1753-1828), see 21 Oct 1789.

⁹ ? *Facts, submitted to the Consideration of the Friends to Civil and Religious Liberty, but more particularly addressed to the Protestant Dissenters of England and Wales; containing Bishop Horsley's Extraordinary Letter to the Clergy of his Diocese; and the Substance of Mr Fox's Speech on the Repeal of the Test laws* (London, 1789).

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recommended to us. You are too generous to propose to assist us. I shall mention it to Mr Russell. They have agreed to raise 200 £ here, but not all for printing.

I have just turned to your former letter, which I happen not to have destroyed. You there say

“very well about his Newton, only not so severe as he deserved – I am also pleased with the remarks on his letter to his clergy.” Surely what appeared in this favourable light to you at first, may so again and to others. If I made any use of the Prospectus at all, what could I say less? And what could I have done when I approved of the undertaking (not then executed) but did not approve of the puff? I see nothing dishonourable //or inconsistent// in my conduct with respect to it. I wish you would desire Mr Belsham to return you his copy, and, if you see him, ask his opinion – I shall send you the remainder of the Defences the next week, but with a very heavy heart, anticipating your disapprobation; but I will suppress the whole rather than ~~not~~ displease you.

Yours & M^{rs} Lindsey’s most affectionately

J Priestley