

97 To THEOPHILUS LINDSEY, 8 February 1791

MS: Dr. Williams's Library, MS. 12.12, f. 195-196

PRINTED: Rutt, I, ii, pp. 100-101

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

POSTMARK: Birmingham, Feb 09 1791

ENDORSEMENT: Ans<sup>d</sup>. Feb 10. 1791.

Birm. Feb 8. 1791

Dear friend

I have received thru D<sup>r</sup> Kippis<sup>1</sup> the invitation you ~~to~~ led me to expect to preach the Annual Sermon for the New College, but I have declined it, thinking it would be wrong to invite me before Mr Wakefield,<sup>2</sup> as //hither to// the tutors only have ~~to~~ preached on that occasion and that it would be impossible to say any thing new, and to the purpose, after what had been already done by others, hinting also that, being //still// very obnoxious to many, my preaching at all might do the cause no good. ~~to~~ I wish also not to appear forward, as I am thought to be, to catch at every opportunity of exhibiting myself, and throwing out bold and insolent things before the Public; and some such things I should be tempted to say, if I did preach this sermon in ~~to~~ present circumstances.

If, however, it be your opinion that such things might be said ~~to~~ with propriety and effect, as necessary to be laid stress upon, considering the opposite maxims now taught in our Universities, and the sermons of Church men, alluding to the sanction given to Mr Burke's<sup>3</sup> principles in the letter of thanks from Oxford, and the Bp of Chester's Sermon<sup>4</sup> &c. &c. shewing the state of things when the Universities were founded how they suited those times, but not these, and the improbability of any change being made in old systems, from which so many derived emolument &c. &c., I should have no great objection to the business. You should see my discourse in good time, and you know I always listen to your admonitions.

In this case I leave it to you to inform D<sup>r</sup> Kippis of my consent. But I think that when my reasons are considered, you will allow the force of them. To deliver common place matter on education would not do. It would disappoint every body on such an occasion. I leave the whole business to you. Dispose of me as you think proper.

Tell Mr Johnson<sup>5</sup> he should send me the Answers to Mr Burke that have come out since mine, as well as those before it, and the Reply to us all. How does the third edition sell?

I do not expect much from Mr Hollis.<sup>6</sup> But you might hint to him, that, if he would do a specific thing, that might do him credit in the eye of the world, he might (as he has no children of his own) give a liberal education to my youngest son, to enable him to succeed me in the course that he approves, that there may [[be]] a friend to public

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<sup>1</sup> Andrew Kippis (1725-1795), see 17 Feb 1771.

<sup>2</sup> Gilbert Wakefield (1756-1801), see 3 Apr 1789.

<sup>3</sup> Edmund Burke (1729-1797), see 22 Mar 1790.

<sup>4</sup> William Cleaver (1742-1815), Bishop of Chester (1787-1800) [ODNB]. The sermon to which Priestley refers is probably Cleaver's *A Sermon preached before the Lords Spiritual and Temporal in the Abbey Church of Westminster, on Monday, January 31, 1791* (Oxford, 1791).

<sup>5</sup> Joseph Johnson (1738-1809), see 18 Jan 1770.

<sup>6</sup> Thomas Brand Hollis (c. 1719-1804), see 15 Oct 1790.

liberty of the same name after I am dead. I once thought that Mr Lee<sup>7</sup> might have done such a thing as this. But nothing is to be expected from him – My expectations of any thing considerable from either of the Mr Wilkinson's<sup>8</sup> are now closed. But I am not discouraged, and think much less of the subject than I did. Joseph is a virtuous and industrious young man, and I trust the same good providence that has attended me, will not forsake him.

Yours & M<sup>rs</sup> Lindsey's

J Priestley

I should think that Dr Kippis's Lectures may be given by Mr Belsham<sup>9</sup> & Mr Wakefield jointly. When I was at Warrington I taught the languages and gave<sup>10</sup> all Dr Kippis's lectures besides.

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<sup>7</sup> John Lee (1733-1793), see Mar 1770.

<sup>8</sup> John Wilkinson (1728-1808), see 17 May 1786; William Wilkinson (1744-1808), see 27 Jul 1787.

<sup>9</sup> Thomas Belsham (1750-1829), see 3 Apr 1789.

<sup>10</sup> Rutt: taught [Rutt, I, ii, 101].