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Title: Letter from Joseph Priestley to Theophilus Lindsey

Date: August 15, 1794

Location: I-BeachW-undated-1

Contact:

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Northumberland Aug. 24. 1796.

Dear friend,

3500-89

I have just been gratified with the sight of a second letter from you, dated April 15, but have not yet received that which you say was enclosed in a parcel of books which went to New York, and when I shall receive that parcel I cannot tell. This is the greatest inconvenience in this country. You may think that by sending a thing to any port in America, it will soon reach any person in the country; but I find that, if it be at any considerable distance, it might as well be in England. Ever since I have heard of the package, I have written letter upon letter to expedite it, but hitherto to no purpose. Where the blame lies I cannot, at this distance, find out, and what to do more I cannot tell. However, I must have patience. If things be sent to Philadelphia, ^{directed to Mr. John Vaughan} I may have them in about a week if small, or a month if large. A certain and ready communication with England would add greatly to my satisfaction in this country; and we have expectation of being soon better in this respect, as a stage is about to be set up between this place and Philadelphia and a post three times a week. At present it is only once. Our last news is that of the engagement at sea, in which the French lost 9 ships, and an uncertain report of the French

having some advantage in Florida, and having
taken Ypres. We have also some hope of the continu-
ance of the peace with England. The Indians
have been repulsed, and we have no apprehension from
them any further than they are instigated, and excited
by the English. The worst circumstance attending this
country is the refusal of some of the back settlers
to pay the taxes. But this, we hope, will soon
be settled, and without blood shed.

I have now seen a summer in this country,
and find it very tolerable, at the worst season, and
in general delightful. The climate is certainly
greatly preferable to that of England, and now I
am perfectly reconciled to it, tho' it is only of late
that I have completely got the better of a violent
diarrhea which I have had more or less of ever
since my landing. My ~~best~~ wife is better than I
ever knew her. She has lately written a second
long letter to Mrs Lindsey. She is so fond of this
place that nothing can draw her from it, and
therefore I have agreed to buy ground, or stock
to build a house, which will be begun very
soon. Indeed, I can make better use of my time here,
both with respect to my theological and philosophical
studies, than I could by being in Philadelphia, where I
could have little time to myself, and should live very
disagreeably, as well as at an expense which I could
not support. I only want my books and instruments
about me, and in this autumn I hope to have them.
My instruments I cannot make much use of till next
year. If I had my books, I could do many things in

mediately. I have begun the continuation of my Church
History, by the help of a few columns of Henry which
I had in the shop with me when I got all my books,
I shall stick close to it, and in two years I think I
can finish it. I have composed, and shall soon print, an
addressal letter to the philosophers and politicians of France
on their profaning their belief in the being of a God, and
on future state, independent of Xty. I have also composed
a sermon to be delivered whenever I preach in Phi-
ladelphia. I have just seen Pain's Age of Reason, and
shall probably make some remarks on it, in another
letter to the philosophers in France. It is arrogant and
absurd in the extreme. I shall give directions to send
25 Copies of everything I publish here, directed to
you, that you may distribute them to my friends
as you please, not forgetting the two Mr. W. Channing,
Mr. Dickinson, and Mr. Salt. The rest you will easily
distribute.

The most violent pamphlet that I have
yet seen is just published here against me,
I will send you a copy. I shall not notice it, but I
hear that some friend will. Another I have just received
printed at New York, as a letter from the Devil to me.
I shall never read it. All these things will excite atten-
tion, and do good. I have just heard that at New York
they are ready to submit to an unitarian meeting,
Kethroy led president and able preachers are wanted,
but they must be tolerably independent in their circum-
stances — This town, the most delightfully situated perhaps
in the world, promises now to become a considerable
place. When a few of my friends are come, we shall build
an unitarian chapel, and probably have a College. At
present I preach sometimes in the Presbyterian meeting; but there

I make a point of saying nothing to offend them. This has
ever tend. to abate prejudice, and will prepare the way
for other things. They all know my opinions and in ge-
neral do not seem to be much shocked at them. I shall in-
troduce my small pamphlets as they are printed at
Philadelphia. The Appeal is among some of them. There are
some few hundred people in this town and as many in ~~London~~
~~Isle~~ ~~Sunbury~~, which is only separated by the river—

I would now give a good deal for a complete set of
the Morning Chronicle, or any tolerable English newspaper the war

5 No. Aug. 29. 1794.

Joseph Priestley

~~PHILADELPHIA~~
The Rev. Mr. Lindsays

Spex Street
Strand
London



is old. I hope Mr. Belsham will send me the Cambridge
Paper. They would amuse me much. We have only few extracts
in the Philadelphia papers. It is a long time since we have
had any accounts of Mr. How, or our friends in the Tower. The
war we hope is too violent to last much longer; and I can-
not help phasing myself much with the idea of visiting England
before I die, perhaps after I have finished my Church History — I read
more of the Hebrew Bible than I almost ever did, and may possibly
revise the whole translation now that I have so much time upon my
hands. My best respects to Mrs. Hanson Mr. Belsham and all friends.
Yours most affectionately, J. Priestley.

Dear friend,

I have just been gratified with the sight of a second letter from you, dated April 15, but have not yet received that which you say was enclosed in a parcel of books which went to New York, and when I shall receive that parcel I cannot tell. This is the greatest inconvenience in this country. You may think that by sending a thing to any port in America it will soon reach any person in the country; but I find that, if it be at any considerable distance, it might as well be in England. Ever since I have heard of the package I have written letter upon letter to expedite it, but hitherto to no purpose. Where the blame lies I cannot, at this distance, find out, and what to do more I cannot tell. However, I must have patience. If things be sent to Philadelphia, directed to Mr. John Vaughan, I may have them in about a week if small, or a month if large. A certain and ready communication with England would add greatly to my satisfaction in this country, and we have expectation of being soon better in this respect, as a stage is about to be set up between this place and Philadelphia and a post three times a week. At present it is only once. Our last news is that of the engagement at sea, in which the French lost 8 ships, and an uncertain report of the French having some advantage in Flanders, and having taken Ypres. We have also more hope of the continuance of the peace with England. The Indians have been repulsed, and we have no apprehension from them any further than they are instigated, and assisted by the English. The worst circumstance attending this country is the refusal of the back settlers to pay the excise. But this, we hope, will soon be settled, and without bloodshed.

I have now seen a summer in this country, and find it very tolerable as the worst season, and in general delightful. The climate is certainly greatly preferable to that of England, and now I am perfectly reconciled to it, tho it is only of late that I have completely got the better of a violent diarrhea which I have had more or less of ever since my landing. My wife is better than I ever knew her. She has lately written a second long letter to Mrs. Lindsey. She is so fond of this place that nothing can draw her from it, and therefore I have agreed to buy ground, on which to build a house, which will be begun very soon. Indeed, I can make better use of my time here, both with respect to my theological and philosophical studies, than I could by being in Philadelphia where I could have little time to myself, and should live very disagreeably, as well as at an expense which I could not support. I only want my books and instruments about me, and in this autumn I hope to have them. My instruments I cannot make much use of till next year. If I had my books, I could do many things immediately. I have begun the continuation of my Church History, by the help of a few volumes of Fleury which I had on the ship with me. When I get all my books, I shall stick close to it, and in two years I think I can finish it. I have composed, and shall soon finish, an additional letter to the philosophers and politicians of France National Assembly: on their professing their belief in the being of a God, and a future state, independent of Xty. I have also composed a Sermon to be delivered whenever I preach in Philadelphia. I have just seen Paine's Age of Reason, and shall probably make some remarks on it, in another letter to the philosophers in France. It is arrogant and absurd in the extreme. I shall give direction to send 2-5 copies of everything I publish here, directed to you that you may distribute them to my friends as you please, and forgetting this time Mr. Wilkinson, Mr. Parkinson, and Mr. Volta. The rest you will easily distinguish.

The most virulent pamphlet that I have yet seen is just published here against me, I will send you a copy. I shall not notice it, but I hear that some friend will. Another I have just received printed at New York, as a letter from the Devil to me. I shall never read it. All those things will excite attention, and do good. I have just heard that at New York they are ready to submit to our unitarian meeting. Nothing but prudent and able preachers are wanted but they must be totally independent in their circumstances -- This town, the most delightfully isolated perhaps in the world, promises now to become a considerable place. When a few of my friends are come we shall build a unitarian chapel, and probably have a College. At present I preach sometimes in the Presbyterian meeting, but there I make a point of saying nothing to offend them. This, however, tends to abate prejudice and will prepare the way for other things. They all know my opinions and in general do not seem to be much shocked at them. I shall introduce my small pamphlets as they are printed at Philadelphia. The Appeal is among some them. There are but five hundred people in this town and as many in Sunbury, which is only separated by the river -

I could now give a great deal for a complete set of the Morning Chronicle, or any tolerable English newspaper tho ever so old. I hope Mr. Belsham will send me the Cambridge papers. It is a long time since we have had any accounts of Mr. Stone, or our friends in the Tower. The War we hope is too violent to last much longer, and I cannot help pleasing myself much with the idea of visiting England before I die, perhaps after I have finished my Church History -- I read more of the Hebrew Bible than I almost ever did, and may possibly write the whole translation now that I have so much time upon my hands. My best to Mrs. Rayner, Mr. Belsham and all friends, and Mrs. Lindsey.

Yours most affectionately