JOSEPH PRIESTLEY AND THE COMPLEXITIES OF LATITUDINARIANISM IN THE 1770s[1]

G.M. Ditchfield

University of Kent

`Many blame him, and he may be perhaps, sometimes to be blamed, for publishing in too hasty a way. But perhaps it is owing to this very temper that he publishes at all, and therefore great allowances should be made, where needed, of this sort'. (Theophilus Lindsey, writing of Priestley, 10 January 1773).[2]

Introduction

Few Protestant Dissenters, or indeed religious writers of any kind, achieved so high a public profile in the eighteenth century as did Joseph Priestley. With the possible exceptions of Benjamin Hoadly and Richard Price, none stimulated such widespread and prolonged controversy. To some extent, the high level of disputation may be attributed to the renaissance-like breadth of Priestley's intellectual interests which, as the present volume amply demonstrates, ranged from electricity to biblical criticism, from natural philosophy to the writing of history. In no areas of his activity, however, did he arouse more passionate conflict than in those of theological doctrine, church government and politics. He was well aware of the way in which his theological opinions made him a target not only of criticism, but also, he believed, of personal abuse. His reply in 1784 to the strictures of the *Monthly Review* upon his *Letters* to Samuel Horsley was plaintive in tone. He wrote `My friend, Mr Lindsey has, in several publications, largely insisted upon *the unitarianism of the primitive christian church* (the very same thing that has roused all the rage of the present Reviewer) without the least note of disapprobation from his predecessors'.[3] He believed that the

Monthly Review had become more hostile to his theology over the previous few years; and consequently, opinions expressed by others could be treated in a measured if not uncritical way, but when articulated by him the same opinions provoked furious resentment.[4]

The full extent of the opprobrium incurred by Priestley over the course of his career is expertly analysed by Dr Wykes in the opening chapter of this volume. How, it might be asked, had Priestley become by 1784 so controversial a public figure? In some ways, of course, the explanation may be found in the frankness of his style. Theophilus Lindsey came to this conclusion in December 1778 when comparing Priestley with Leibnitz. While the latter did not differ `*au fond* as the french say from D$^{r}$ Priestley', wrote Lindsey, `he takes care not to stagger his readers by the harshness of his expressions, whereas my friend with a fearless conviction of the truth never uses any softening'.[5] This chapter proposes to investigate one of the most significant ways in which, through his published work and unpublished correspondence, Priestley had constructed for himself, not altogether intentionally, a reputation as a forceful and at times acerbic author. Its chosen method of so doing involves a particular illumination of one of the best-known religious and political phenomena of the eighteenth century. That phenomenon was the affinity - sometimes uneasy but generally resilient - between Anglican Latitudinarianism and Protestant Dissent, an affinity developed in response to the perception of a common threat from High Churchmen of the generation of Francis Atterbury and Henry Sacheverell. Even with the mid-century decline of party strife at the national level, many local, constituency, conflicts were still fuelled by a clash of interests between those of a high church persuasion, and an alliance of low churchmen and Dissenters. However, this chapter will suggest that during the 1770s, that alliance was placed under considerable

pressure and that the complexities which it involved can be illustrated by a focus upon the controversy between Priestley and Benjamin Dawson, at that time the rector of Burgh in Suffolk.

Anglican Latitudinarianism and Protestant Dissent

In an important article published in 1988, John Spurr suggested that the term `latitudinarian' originated in the mid-seventeenth century as a somewhat pejorative expression, applied to those nominally Puritan clergy who retreated from the rigours of Calvinism and conformed to the re-established Church of England after 1660.[6] Dr Spurr identified a set of opinions widely attributed to Latitudinarians of Charles II's reign. They included a moderate Arminianism, an emphasis on the ethical dimensions of religion and on the preaching of morality, the elevation of reason, an attraction towards with the `scientific' methods of intellectual inquiry promoted by the newly-formed Royal Society and a tolerant attitude towards Dissenters. But Dr Spurr showed that attitudes of this sort were in fact widely shared among Restoration clergymen as a whole and questioned the existence of an organised latitudinarian `party' in the Restoration Church.

But gradually, and especially after 1688-89 a more distinctive Latitudinarian mentality emerged, graced by post-1689 bishops such as Gilbert Burnet and enhanced by the Whig ethos of Cambridge University, where the `new' science inspired by Isaac Newton accorded well with theological speculation.[7] Latitudinarian clergymen contributed substantially to the intellectual climate which some historians have come to regard as a clerical enlightenment.[8] Hence by the early, and even more by the middle years of the eighteenth century, Latitudinarianism had achieved a far greater level of respectability. As Martin Fitzpatrick has shown, eighteenth-century Latitudinarians, like their Restoration predecessors, were distinguished by a distaste

for sacerdotalism, by an acceptance of rationality as entirely consistent with revelation, and by a Protestant optimism about the ability of the human mind to read and interpret the Scriptures independently, according to conscience. As Dr Fitzpatrick neatly puts it,

> [Latitudinarians] were tolerant of differences, stressed the common core of Christianity and placed the creeds and dogma at the margins of their concerns. They were not prepared to allow philosophical differences to outweigh their commitment to moderation and, in their different contexts, to the *via media*. Many still hoped for a comprehensive establishment.[9]

A continuing hostility towards Catholicism made Protestant unity, in the form of comprehension of Dissent within a reformed Church, a priority. On terms such as these, Latitudinarians and Dissenters could, to quote Dr Fitzpatrick, `co-exist for the most part in mutual admiration'.[10]

Hence Benjamin Hoadly, in *The Reasonableness of Conformity to the Church of England represented to the Dissenting Ministers*, published in 1703, had urged Dissenters to re-join the Church of England, arguing that they had no good cause to remain outside it. With a characteristic Latitudinarian plea for sincerity, he criticised the practice of occasional conformity as a denial of individual authenticity as well as a profanation of the sacrament.[11] Mindful of the threat, as he saw it, from Non-jurors and from Catholicism, and with the prospect of a Jacobite restoration in the background, Hoadly appealed to Dissenters to end the disunity among English Protestants:

> It grieves me to see a Church torn to pieces, it's members divided from one another, Discord triumphing upon the ruins of Unity, and Uncharitableness

> reigning without controul; and all this brought about by men of seriousness and consideration, men that profess they desire nothing more than the edification, and perfection of this very Church. Had You asked the Enemies of this Church and Nation; (those whom it hath so gloriously and successfully opposed;) which way You should take to ruine both Church and Nation; they would have thought of no other, but the encouraging such a *separation*: and they may well be pleased that You think *separation* your duty in order to *a farther reformation*.[12]

Hoadly hoped to persuade the Church of England to relax the barriers – notably the sacramental and thirty-nine articles tests – which stood between conscientious Dissenters and the possibility of a re-united Protestantism. It was a plausible aspiration, especially as the sense of a threat to the Church posed by Dissenters faded considerably in the middle years of the eighteenth century. When the public image of Dissent was represented by the eirenical ethos of such as Isaac Watts and Philip Doddridge and local relationships between clergymen and their Dissenting fellow-citizens were frequently quite harmonious and could involve co-operation in philanthropic endeavour.[13]

W.M. Spellman insisted on the doctrinal orthodoxy - especially the Trinitarian orthodoxy - of the leading Latitudinarian churchmen of Archbishop Tillotson's time.[14] But by the middle and later years of the eighteenth century, if not earlier, one notable - and interesting - characteristic of the Latitudinarian ethos was a willingness to engage with heterodoxy over the doctrine of the Trinity - in its Arian and even its Socinian forms - on the assumption of a shared basis of Christianity, rather than regarding heterodoxy as beyond the pale of Christianity and therefore untouchable. Hence the Rational Dissent of Priestley's generation, as well as orthodox Dissent,

could participate in the affinity with Latitudinarianism. For this and other reasons, there is no necessary inconsistency between Jonathan Clark's location of the springs of radical ideology among Socinians and John Gascoigne's detection of that ideology within Anglican Latitudinarianism.[15] As the brief entry in the third edition of the *Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* perceptively notes, Latitudinarianism `could encourage a prosaic, commonsense piety which occasionally harboured heterodoxy concerning the Trinity'.[16] A measure of (often carefully coded) theological radicalism could exist within the Church as well as among Rational Dissenters.

One feature of the alliance was an alignment in politics between Latitudinarians and Dissenters in electoral support for the Whig party. Indeed, as James Bradley puts it, `the alliance between Dissenters and Low-Church Anglicans at the local level … was the very basis for the definition of local Whig parties'.[17] An example of its practical operation may be found in the mid-1770s. As the dispute between Britain and its North American colonies deteriorated to the point of war in 1775-6, high churchmen tended to support the ministry of Lord North (who, after all, from 1772 was Chancellor of Oxford University) and to identify with the Episcopalian Church in the colonies. Significantly, the cult of Charles I, and the excoriations of the sinfulness of rebellion preached in 30 January sermons, underwent something of a resurgence in the 1770s.[18] By contrast, as James Bradley's analysis has demonstrated, Dissenters and Low Church Anglicans combined in quite substantial numbers in the promotion of petitions to king and Parliament in favour of conciliatory rather than coercive measures towards the British North American colonies.[19] However, a slightly earlier opportunity for co-operation along these lines had arisen in 1772-4 with the issue of subscription to the thirty-nine articles of the Church of England. There was in principle a shared opposition to the authority of the magistrate in spiritual matters and

to the imposition of human formularies as tests of fitness for ecclesiastical or civil office. The two campaigns, in Parliament, in the country, and in pamphlet controversy - the Feathers Tavern petition, and the Dissenters campaign recorded in the Minutes of the General Body of Dissenting Ministers, held at Dr Williams's Library - had much in common. Potentially, each stood to benefit from the success of the other.

Priestley's controversy with Benjamin Dawson

There were, of course, many shared perceptions between Anglican Latitudinarianism and Rational Dissent over the topical issues of the 1770s. They included lingering suspicions of the supposedly authoritarian intentions of George III; concern over threats to domestic liberties, particularly after the affair of the Midddlesex elections; opposition to the use of force in America, and unease about the concessions to Catholicism built into the Quebec Act of 1774. But there were also fundamental differences. No individual assumed a more visible and important role in the exposure of those differences than Priestley. That role is well illustrated by his brief but very bitter controversy with Benjamin Dawson, which forms the central theme of this chapter.

It was a controversy all the more piquant because Benjamin Dawson had been a Dissenting minister before conforming to the Church of England. In fact, he was everything that an eighteenth-century Dissenting minister should have been. He was a pupil of Caleb Rotheram's dissenting academy at Kendal and a graduate of Glasgow University, where he was a scholar on Dr Williams's foundation, and was awarded the degree of LL.D. He served as a minister to a succession of small dissenting congregations in Staffordshire and in Cheshire and then at St Thomas's Presbyterian church, Southwark. Even after he followed the example of two of his brothers in conforming to the Church of England, which he did in 1758, he remained a

sympathiser with Dissent. In the later 1760s he resided at Warrington as the private tutor to Sir Benjamin Ibbetson of Leeds, who was a pupil at Warrington Academy where at the same time Priestley was tutor in languages and belles-lettres (from 1761-7) and he associated with the literary circle of John Aikin.[20] Moreover Benjamin Dawson's brother Obadiah remained a dissenter and was a member of Priestley's congregation at Mill Hill chapel, Leeds. Even after conforming, Dawson himself maintained good personal relations with some individual Dissenters.

In 1771 Dawson edited for publication the *Free Thoughts on the Subject of a farther Reformation of the Church of England*, written by the Anglican clergyman John Jones, vicar of Alconbury (1700-70). Jones by this time was best known as the author of the *Free and Candid Disquisitions relating to the Church of England*, published anonymously (in 1749), and an effective plea for large-scale church reform including a much reduced form of clerical subscription. In the commentary which he provided to this work, Dawson identified himself fully with Jones's conclusions and the means by which he had reached them. Indeed he claimed that Jones had requested him to undertake the publication.[21] In the preface, Dawson stated:

> The end of the controversy, it should be remembered, is the improvement of our ecclesiastical establishment, more particularly in the removal of those restraints upon religious freedom, which were unhappily admitted into it at the first, and are suffered to continue in it, though evidently to its discredit and disadvantage, if not immediate danger.[22]

Dawson stressed the desirability of the exertion of `all the friends of religious truth and freedom to excite attention to the original principles of protestantism' in order to bring about the desired reformation.[23] He demonstrated his own commitment to the Latitudinarian ideal by writing a series of effective defences of *The Confessional*, the

learned critique of subscription to human formularies published by Francis Blackburne, archdeacon of Cleveland, in 1766.[24] He was recognised publicly by Blackburne as his chief ally in the subsequent controversy. In the third edition of the *Confessional* (1770), Blackburne described him as `an incomparable writer, one whose superiority in this disputation will be acknowledged and admired in distant times'.[25] As if to justify Blackburne's encomium, Dawson served as secretary to the Feathers Tavern Association, formed in the summer of 1770. He was one of the signatories to the petition which it circulated in 1771-2 for the abolition of the system of subscription to the thirty-nine articles for Anglican clergymen and English undergraduates.[26]

However, it was clear in all Dawson's work that he was writing from within the frontiers of the Church itself. In his own `Remarks', appended to his edition of John Jones's work, he seized upon a passage from Priestley's *Considerations on Church Authority* of 1769 in which the latter had asked the rhetorical question `Who among the clergy, that read and think at all, are supposed to believe one third of the thirty-nine articles of the Church of *England*?'. Priestley's purpose had been to protest against the attacks upon ecclesiastical reformers levelled in Archdeacon Thomas Balguy's Lambeth Chapel sermon `On Church authority', preached at the consecration of Jonathan Shipley in 1769. In that sermon, Balguy had criticised those who `propose a reformation in the church, while they continue in it', while remaining silent about those who came into the church while disbelieving all or some of its articles. Ominously, Priestley had concluded, `Men who have come *this way* into the church, have always proved its firmest friends. Having made no bones of their own scruples, they pay no regard to the scruples of others'.[27]

Dawson's response to this allegation of widespread clerical hypocrisy was sharp:

> To charge us (at least to insinuate such a charge) with *not believing*, if we read and think *at all, one third* of what we have solemnly subscribed, is more than uncandid and indecent; it is to *detract* from our good name … We are moreover, from the very nature of such a charge, precluded from pleading to it, though we may be perfectly innocent. Conscience may acquit us of insincerity to *ourselves*, but it cannot be *produced* in evidence of our sincerity.[28]

Dawson accused Priestley of claiming in a misleading way that he spoke for `the generality of dissenters' in expressing so `uncharitable' an opinion of the Anglican clergy. In an effort to rebut such a claim, he deliberately provoked Priestley by quoting the responses at their respective ordinations of two of Priestley's former Warrington pupils, Philip Taylor at Liverpool and Robert Gore at Manchester, respectively, in June and August 1770. In each case, the ordinand, when asked his reasons for taking up the dissenting ministry, replied with irenical and even complimentary remarks about the Church of England. As Philip Taylor had put it:

> Whilst I enjoy the advantages of a toleration; whilst I am permitted without molestation to worship God in the manner I most approve; I shall think myself bound by the laws of candour, of moderation, and even of gratitude, to refrain from saying, or doing any thing which may give *unnecessary* offence to the professors of that system of religion, which the laws of this kingdom have countenanced and established.[29]

Priestley made his initial riposte in *A Letter of Advice to those Dissenters who conduct the Application to Parliament for Relief from certain Penal Laws, with various Observations relating to similar subjects* (1773), in which he devoted a separate section to Dawson's strictures. He accused Dawson of defending Socinianism in his

Sermons preached at Lady Moyer's Lectures and thus contradicting himself by subscribing to Trinitarian articles, not `in the days of youth and ignorance', but at the age of 29, `after a most liberal education among the Dissenters, with whom this subject never fails to be fully considered, and well understood'.[30] To Priestley, Dawson's apostasy from Dissent was a prime target. He described Dawson's conformity as a `dark transaction', adding, `We lament the loss of the men to the dissenting interest, and more lament the wounds which, by their conduct, have been given to the more important interests of truth and probity'.[31]

Priestley proceeded to complain that not only had Dawson conformed, but had then, having benefited from the privileges of establishment and sought preferment therein, had the temerity to assume the character of advocate for religious liberty. His charge was that Dawson - to quote Priestley - `had purposely carried his dissenting principles into the church, because they were more wanted there; though every thing he knew of that church might have made him sensible, that instead of being able to effect her freedom, he must himself continue a slave with her, and to her'.[32] Then he made the decisive point which above all epitomised the difference between him and his antagonist:

> The Doctor has … so far renounced the favourite sentiments of the Dissenters, as even to boast of the protection of the civil magistrate, as the crown and ornament of the church of which he is now a member; whereas we think it a disgrace to Christianity, and inconsistent with the true spirit of it, to acknowledge any such obligation to the civil power; and rather boast that our religion stands unconnected with it, and independent of it.[33]

He accused Dawson of hypocrisy, caricaturing him as someone willing to subscribe repeatedly to the thirty-nine articles in return for ecclesiastical advancement. In so

doing, Priestley drew a vivid contrast between Dawson's conduct and that of William Chambers, rector of Achurch in Northamptonshire (who, like Francis Blackburne, declined offers of preferment rather than subscribe again) and that of William Robertson of Rathvilly (who had resigned from the Church in 1764). He concluded by repudiating the remarks about the Church made at their ordinations by Philip Taylor and Robert Gore.

There was a particular irony in this confrontation, since both Priestley and Dawson had as their original target Thomas Balguy (1716-95), archdeacon of Winchester and one of the severest critics of the Feathers Tavern petitioners. The irony was compounded by the fact that Balguy had been educated in Latitudinarian circles and that his father John Balguy (1686-1748), a prebendary of Salisbury, had been a protégé of Benjamin Hoadly. In January 1773 Dawson published *A Letter to the clergy of the archdeaconry of Winchester*, which was an attempt to refute Balguy's allegations that the clerical petition against subscription, if granted, would allow heretics and sectaries into the church and threaten the civil as well as the religious establishment. In this work he could not resist a further blow at Priestley when he invited Balguy to decline Priestley's backhanded compliment to him to the effect that he had given priority to his good sense over his sincerity when subscribing the thirty-nine articles.

Dawson, however, faced a serious intellectual problem in seeking to counter Balguy's anxieties. While advocating the Feathers Tavern petition and other moves for liturgical reform, he and other Latitudinarian clergy had to defend themselves against the accusation - levelled by Balguy and many others - that they were trying to destroy the Church from within. It was an accusation all the more difficult to ignore at a time when disaffection in America, Wilkite agitation (sometimes blasphemous) in Britain

and anti-clerical moves in the House of Commons had revived Anglican fears of internal and external danger. Hence Latitudinarians were obliged to emphasise their loyalty, both doctrinally and institutionally, to the state Church. But in so doing, of course, they could not but distance themselves from the essentially voluntarist Dissenting ethos so clearly articulated by Priestley. For Dawson was in effect expounding a variant on the Anglican *via media* when he claimed that `The Magistrate in this free land knows a much more effectual method than this [i,e. subscription] of supporting his *Civil authority* against every invasion of it, (happily for all sides) whether from the folly and madness of a *Sectary*, or from the ambition and insolence of a Churchman'.[34] The abolition of subscription to the articles would enhance, not undermine, the authority of the magistrate, which would be all the more respected if it were `uniformly exerted in protecting his subjects, as well in their *religious*, as in their *civil* rights'.[35] Dawson summarised his response to Balguy's allegations by insisting:

> It is therefore most evidently the *improvement*, not the *destruction*, the *reformation*, not the *abolishment* of our present establishment, which is aimed at by the Petitioners. And proposals of this nature have ever been considered by men not more distinguished by their stations in the church, than by their learning, moderation, and withal their attachment to our constitution both in Church and state, not only as harmless, but as worthy of encouragement.[36]

Dawson upheld the consistency of reason and scripture and suggested that a general declaration of belief in the scriptures (as that embodied in the Dissenters' relief act of 1779 and reluctantly accepted by them) would be far preferable to subscription to human formularies. But in so doing, he went a considerable distance towards a

positive embrace, rather than a tacit acceptance, of the authority of the state in matters of religion:

> We may hope to appear, in future, to have acted with peculiar propriety and consistency, when we submitted our cause to Parliament, and be considered in that application, not as dissatisfied with the authority claimed by the Magistrate, but, on the contrary, as fully satisfied therewith, and therefore suing to the legislative body for an interposition of that authority to redress a religious grievance, which continues not without a manifest inconsistence with *his own* establishment, and derogation from *his own* judgment.[37]

Herein lay the real heart of the controversy. Dawson might criticise the manner in which magisterial authority was currently used, but he accepted its existence in principle. Priestley on the other hand denied its very legitimacy. Dawson's arguments accorded a higher priority to the promotion of unity within the Church as currently constituted than to a revived scheme of comprehension. While Priestley's initial target in his *Letter of Advice* had been those Dissenting ministers who conformed to the established Church, his fiercest fire was reserved for the principle of a state church and the state imposition of doctrinal formularies. Such indeed was his suspicion of parliamentary authority in the religious sphere that he was not one of the earliest campaigners on behalf of the Dissenters when they followed the example of the Feathers Taverners and launched their own petition for reform of the subscription laws.[38] Between Priestley and Dawson there was undoubtedly an element of personal dislike. But their controversy had far deeper roots and involved very much more than a clash of personalities.

The importance of the subscription issue, 1772-74

The problems inherent in the relations between Latitudinarianism and Dissent may be detected in a private but very sharp disagreement between Priestley and Theophilus Lindsey, which arose at the very beginning of the subscription campaign early in 1772 and smouldered for two further years. Although when writing to Lindsey in March 1772 Priestley expressed support for the aims of the clerical petitioners, he added that it was absurd and futile for Anglican clergymen to appeal to Parliament:

> You must permit us Dissenters … however, who are not used to the idea even of *spiritual superiors*, to smile at your scheme as an application to the *powers of this world* for a reformation in the business of religion. As the disciple of a master whose kingdom is not of this world, I should be ashamed to ask any thing of temporal powers, except more peace and quietness, which being temporal blessings, they may bestow; but I should be sorry to make any application to them, which should imply an acknowledgement of their having *other* kind of power. The more I think of an application to such a house of Commons, or such a parliament as ours, on the subject of religion, the more does the absurdity of it strike me. But I shall say no more on this subject, lest I should offend you. I really did not mean to say so much.[39]

At that point, in the spring of 1772, it was far from certain that Lindsey, John Jebb in Cambridge (or anyone else) would actually resign from the Church over this question. It was not until two years later, and only when Lindsey's resignation of the vicarage of Catterick was an accomplished fact, that Priestley published his *Letter to a Layman, on the subject of the Rev. Mr Lindsey's Proposal for a Reformed English Church upon the plan of the late Dr Samuel Clarke.* In this work he praised Lindsey's aspirations for a broader liturgical basis for the Church, and also commended

Lindsey's *Apology*. But he had a powerful polemical motive for doing so; he could then cite Lindsey's failure to achieve an internal reformation of the Church of England as firm evidence of its incorrigible corruption, and as a further reason to oppose any form of state establishment in religion. When Lindsey wrote to William Turner in Wakefield that `D^{r}. Priestley is indeed a warm and true friend to me, and to the cause of God's truth which he has most earnestly at heart. He has signified to me his kind efforts in my behalf and their success', he referred not to the Feathers Tavern petition but to his decision to set up an independent Unitarian chapel at Essex Street in London.[40]

Behind these exchanges lay three distinct sources of strain in the affinity between Latitudinarianism and Dissent. In the first place, Priestley detected in the conformity of Benjamin Dawson the dangerously seductive attractions of the Church of England, attractions gilded by the prospects of upward social mobility, favourable marriage alliances and career advancement. There was nothing new, of course, in Dissenting anxiety about the decay of their interest, a cause of concern to the generation of Philip Doddridge as well as to that of Priestley.[41] In the 1770s, however, it was exacerbated by the realisation not only of the fall in Dissenting numbers in the middle years of the eighteenth century, but by the divisive effects of evangelical Calvinism. One result of this development was a serious split among the General Baptist body in 1770, with the secession from it of a substantial number of adherents under the leadership of the former Wesleyan preacher Dan Taylor. Priestley himself on several occasions expressed pessimism over the state of Rational Dissent, while Richard Price was to complain in 1778, `The truth is … that the Dissenting interest, particularly in and about London, is declining very fast'.[42] The more closely that Latitudinarianism compromised with, and accommodated itself, with a disturbing sense of comfort to,

the establishment, the more isolated would Rational Dissent become. It would be dangerously positioned between a more comprehensive and authoritarian Church on the one hand, and an evangelically revived Orthodox Dissent with an increasingly conservative theological agenda, on the other.[43]

Secondly, Latitudinarians and Dissenters shared, to some extent, the anxiety that the early years of George III's reign had been accompanied by a more `authoritarian' tone in secular and spiritual affairs - the familiar Whig myth. Immediately before the re-emergence of the subscription issue, Priestley and Philip Furneaux had been involved in a dispute with William Blackstone. They had felt it necessary to devote considerable energy to resisting the great jurist's efforts to limit the libertarian implications for Dissent of Lord Mansfield's celebrated judgement - that nonconformity was not a crime at law - in the Evans case of 1767.[44] Yet it seemed that many clergymen from Cambridge Whig or from Latitudinarian backgrounds either rallied to the Court - Thomas Balguy and Richard Hurd being obvious examples - or confined their expressions of unease to carefully coded forms, as exemplified by Jonathan Shipley's 1770 sermon before the House of Lords. To many Dissenters, the final proof was provided by the very limited clerical support for the Feathers Tavern petition. Lindsey's letters repeatedly record his discouragement when canvassing for signatures. His scorn for the reluctance of Peter Peckard, of Madgalene college, Cambridge, to sign, encapsulates this attitude - he wrote `I fear Peckard does not speak home, because he seeks Preferment and would not petition with us'.[45]

Thirdly, as Martin Fitzpatrick has demonstrated, Priestley was already well on the way towards the development of his theory of `universal toleration'.[46] By contrast, there remained within the mentality of many Latitudinarians a deep suspicion of Catholicism. Archdeacon Francis Blackburne in particular, abetted by Thomas Hollis,

believed that Catholic numbers were increasing and that they posed an internal and external threat. In 1767 the bishops even commissioned a survey into the extent of those numbers.[47] A key reason for Blackburne's bitter opposition to Lindsey's secession from the Church was his conviction that Protestant unity was all the more necessary at such a time. In his will he bequeathed just £10 to Lindsey's wife (although later, in a codicil, he increased the bequest to £20).[48] To Blackburne and others, the Catholic Church was incapable of change and would always be inseparably linked to persecution. Even the suppression of the Jesuit order by Clement XIV in 1773 did nothing to lessen this sentiment; the death of that Pope in 1774 was widely interpreted as the result of poisoning by the Jesuits. To Priestley, Protestant unity on the basis of such a level of intolerance was a contradiction in terms. As he wrote to Lindsey on 18 December 1769: `You smile at my *nostrum*, as you call my sentiments concerning the poor papists, and I smile at your panic concerning them. I hope that we shall continue to think for ourselves, to smile at and bear with one another. We see things in very different lights'.[49] Lindsey, indeed, was relatively slow to follow Priestley in the direction of `universal toleration'. In his *Farewell Address* on resigning the vicarage of Catterick in 1773, he had admonished his parishioners about papists, `*against whose seducing arts I beg you to be continually upon your guard*', and of whom a considerable number are recorded as resident in the region of Catterick.[50] Not until the Gordon Riots of June 1780 helped to convince him that English Unitarians and Catholics shared a common victimhood did Lindsey come to share Priestley's view.[51] Benjamin Dawson, too, evinced a Blackburne-like degree of paranoia over Catholicism. His *Letter to the Clergy of the Archdeaconry of Winchester* complained that `the maxims of the *Romish* church begin to be disseminated *openly* among his Majesty's subjects' and that `Popery', and not the

petitioning clergy, were the Church of England's real enemy. He arraigned Balguy for espousing `Popish' principles of authoritarianism and insisted that `the argument cannot conclude in favour of a requisition to subscribe the 39 Articles, or any other *unscriptural* formulary of religion, without bringing us … *directly to Popery*'.[52] Latitudinarian anxieties were heightened by the Quebec Act of 1774, hastily passed into law at the very end of the parliamentary session. Many of those who took a particularly rigorously `Protestant' view of the Church of England, such as Shute Barrington - one of the few bishops nominated during the ministry of the Latitudinarian (and subsequently Unitarian) Duke of Grafton - persisted with that attitude and applauded the fall of the Papacy in 1799. There were, of course, Dissenters as well as Latitudinarians who detected the spirit of `Popery' within the Church of England. But to Priestley and his fellow Rational Dissenters such an attitude was at variance with enlightenment notions of the free circulation of opinions and the belief in the ultimate triumph of truth in a free market of intellectual inquiry.

These considerations of principle help to explain why there were significant differences between the Feathers Tavern petitioners and the campaign of the General Body of Dissenting ministers. Partly, but not entirely, for tactical reasons the Dissenters emphasised the differences between their petition and that of the clerical reformers. Dissenters, they and their parliamentary advocates argued, were not part of a state church and did not enjoy its emoluments; hence they could not and should not be subjected to its doctrinal articles. Dissenting denominations were free to impose or not to impose their own doctrinal tests if they saw fit. The Church of England was a state Church, with all the privileges and advantages that established status conferred; a measure of parliamentary superintendence could thus logically be justified. Hence the Dissenters' petitions repeatedly won majorities in the House of Commons, while

the Feathers Tavern petition was twice defeated there, on the second occasion (in May 1774) without even a division

To Lindsey, this implicit endorsement of so erastian a view of church-state relations was a cause of dismay. On 12 April 1772 he wrote to complain to the Dissenter William Turner of Westgate Chapel, Wakefield that a widening of the difference between the objectives of the two campaigns could only harm them both:

> I do not know whether you have seen the *printed Case* of the Dissenters, as given to the Members on this occasion. A friend sent it to me, and remarked that Reason xii seemd rather to[o] *invidiously* he says, I woud say, *heedlessly* given on this occasion. It is this - "Because the reasons for which Subscription is deemed necessary under an estabilishment [*sic*], do not extend to the case of a Toleration".
>
> [It seems] *your* Advocates in the house, almost all [en]larged upon the difference between the two [petitions, yours] and our's. But this coud be only owing to their ignorance, and political notions of religion. If they believe the SS.[1] to be of divine authority, and pay any regard to the natural rights of conscience, they must relieve all Subjects equally from such a yoke.[53]

The implication was that Dissenters were prepared to accept, tacitly, the principle of subscription for the Anglican clergy. Priestley, indeed, told Lindsey privately that he thought this twelfth reason of the Dissenters' case to be `very proper'.[54] What else, he might have asked, could one expect of a state Church? To him, it was a delusion, a contradiction in terms, to expect serious liberalisation from within the established Church, especially one dominated by what he famously derided as `the old building of

error and superstition', beneath which he claimed in a metaphorical sense, to be `laying gunpowder, grain by grain'.[55]

This greatly increased Lindsey's concern about Priestley's attacks upon Dawson. He thought that Priestley was unjust to the Feathers Tavern petitioners and that his contribution was unhelpful. Instead, he yearned for the prolongation of the alliance between Latitudinarianism and Dissent:

> I have mentiond to him [Priestley] …. a report that had given me much concern, viz^{t}. that he was going to attack D^{r}. B. Dawson in form, and thro' him our Petition and the Petitioners. I could not be easy, however, so confidently was it asserted, with^{t}. making him acquainted with it. We have surely one comon cause. We are brethren, and sh^{d}. not quarrel by the way. And tho' others are irritable, and cannot stifle resentment, I think D^{r}. Priestley has too much christian spirit and benevolence to enter into a personal controversy at any time, much less into such a controversy at this time.[56]

In reply to a (regrettably lost) letter of protest from Lindsey, Priestley replied:

> I am truly sorry that I made the observation in my last on your application to parliament, in which I am really much interested, and in the success of which I shall most sincerely rejoice. I cannot help thinking, however, that an application to temporal powers to remove religious grievances is a very different thing in those who continue in a state of voluntary subjection to them, and in those who never owned their authority. In the former case a request to make any alteration seems to be a recognition of a power either to make it or not to make it; whereas in the latter case, it is only desiring a person to recede from a claim, which never has been, and never will be

> acknowledged. It is possible, however, that you and I may differ in several of our ideas on this subject …. I should be very sorry if this inadvertence should have displeased you.

But he was nonetheless unrepentant:

> I cannot help smiling [Priestley continued] at the anxiety you express about my apprehended controversy with Dr Dawson, not being able to imagine how it could be of any disservice to you as petitioning clergy …. this is the man, though living in contradiction to every principle of the Confessional, is considered by the author of it as his best supporter in the controversy. Were I the author of that work, I should think myself under a necessity of disclaiming all connection with him. It was certainly petulant and foolish in him to attack me as he has done. His brother Obadiah, who is one of my hearers, said to me upon the occasion, "I do not know what my brother meant by attacking you, but I know he hates the Dissenters". I am afraid his case is that of one who hates the light because his deeds are evil.[57]

Lindsey was far from mollified. Although he confided that `Dr Priestley is incapable of writing any thing to disparage us or our cause',[58] he awaited the publication of his friend's *Letter of Advice to those Dissenters who conduct the Application to Parliament for Relief from certain Penal Laws.* In August 1773 he wrote to William Turner in Wakefield:

> These are matters I have heard bandied about in my late travels; and greater will be the outcries of some people when D^{r} P's intended work[59] appears - in which he proposes to makes [*sic*] reprisals on one *of us* who had indeed wantonly attacked him. I prevented this retaliation being earlier made and

> thought the thing w[d] have been put up with: But the Doctor must judge what is properest for himself to do. I rec[d]. a few lines from him at the time you did, with some intimations of the same kind.[60]

Two months later, he added:

> He [Priestley] has sent me his pamphlet already printed, but which he thinks to alter, and desired my free sentiments upon it. And I have told him, what indeed appears to me, that *the Letter of advice* will certainly disserve the Dissenting clergy in the object of their present application to Parliament by alarming men's minds.[61]

He referred several times to Priestley's disputation with Dawson, complaining to John Jebb in March 1773 that `Such little petulancies may as well be spared'.[62] He claimed, indeed, to have acted as a restraining influence upon his friend. But what was to become a close intellectual collegiality between them was greatly facilitated by Lindsey's departure from the Church and his formal and his open, as distinct from unofficial, assumption of the mantle of Rational Dissent. As I have suggested elsewhere, it was Priestley, more than any other individual, who eased Lindsey's own journey into Dissent.[63] Dawson, by contrast, was accused in a pseudonymous letter to the press of excluding Dissenters from open endorsement of the Feathers Tavern petition; `That gentleman will not permit a Dissenter's name to appear in his list; he fears to alarm the King and his friends'.[64]

Conclusion: Latitudinarianism and Dissent at the end of the 1770s.

Where, then, did the outcome of the subscription controversy leave the affinity between Latitudinarianism and Dissent? In 1779, Dissenting ministers and schoolmasters did obtain a measure of relief, but for Latitudinarian clergymen there

was only one escape from the stark choice between subscription or secession. That was the route taken by Francis Blackburne and others of the older generation, who declined further subscription to the articles. This, as Martin Fitzpatrick has shown, was a position that was wide open to the charge of intellectual dishonesty, at a time when enlightenment values and incipient Romanticism in unlikely combination were serving to discredit such prevarication and to elevate the discovery and expression of the authentic self. We know that in the event very few clergymen seceded from the Church in response to this dilemma - far fewer, for instance, that the number of Evangelical clergymen who departed from the Church of England in the first half of the nineteenth century. Those few who did secede did so in peculiar individual circumstances, often as a last resort, and generalisation from such cases is difficult and of little value. The dreaded labels of `schism' and `schismatic' still carried much odium.

Critics of Trinitarian orthodoxy who remained within the Church - such as Peter Peckard, who in 1794 became Dean of Peterborough, John Conant, rector of Hastingleigh in Kent, John Hey, Norrisian professor of Divinity at Cambridge – or even bishop Richard Watson - were unmolested, if rarely preferred. But there was a deep and widening gulf between those bred as churchmen who above all feared being cut adrift, and Dissent, especially Rational Dissent, which could pursue popular, often unlettered evangelical Calvinism at one extreme, and - in Priestley's case - intellectual speculation embracing Socinianism at the other. Blackburne's letters to Lindsey from the 1750s and early 1760s more than one hundred of which are preserved in Dr Williams's Library, help to explain why so few clergymen of his inclination resigned. One of the few was another of Blackburne's sons-in-law, John Disney, who joined Lindsey as co-minister of Essex Street chapel in 1782. Lindsey

believed that Blackburne `thinks that the original sin lies with me in drawing his son-in-law out of the church'.[65] Blackburne's reasons for holding so implacable a view were twofold. Outside the Church he detected only religious anarchy:

> I have seen so much to dislike in all our religious Associations, that I own I never could think of joyning with any of them. There is such a cursed tendency in them all to the vortex of an Establishment that I think it better rather to be actually *in* a bad one, than in that intermediate state which has most of the Evils of the worst and none of the Advantages of any.[66]

Some Latitudinarians, indeed, such as Edmund Law and William Paley, would not even sign the Feathers Tavern Petition. But the fear of being cut adrift was doctrinal as well as institutional. Socinianism, quite apart from its uncertain legal status, was widely perceived to be subversive of the moral as well as the ecclesiastical order. Blackburne became convinced that fully-fledged Socinianism was a theological step too far; its open profession gave dangerous ammunition to enemies of the Church. During his last years he penned the vehement tract *An Answer to the Question, why are you not a Socinian*? It was not published in his lifetime and only appeared in the edition of his collected works in 1804. Nor was Blackburne the only supporter of the Feathers Tavern petition who strongly disapproved of Lindsey's secession; others, too, held that his departure weakened the Latitudinarian cause.[67] In doing so, Lindsey probably also played some part in weakening the Church's fundamental Protestant credentials, thus making a re-union with Dissent even more unlikely in the longer term.

Priestley's central objections to a state church made him particularly critical of those who questioned its articles, but remained within it - especially after Lindsey's resignation. He believed that there were many of them: he noted in 1782 `Were all the

speculative Unitarians in the church of England to become serious christians, and consequently think it their duty to leave it, the desertion would be very conspicuous and alarming'.[68] To him an established Church could never be anything but an established Church - it would remain objectionable in principle, incapable of fundamental reform without destroying itself and always prone to the abuse of authority. He contrasted the close association between Dissenting ministers and their congregations, which, in an ideal world, would freely have chosen them, with the undemocratic nominations to church livings of the established clergy. `The people belonging to the established church', he wrote, `are like the *vassals* of the Polish nobility, or the mere *live stock* of a farm, delivered over, as *parcel of the estate*, to every successive incumbent'.[69]

Priestley never forgot that he was the heir to the Dissenting tradition and to the voluntary principle and opposition to a state religion which were fundamental to its teaching. A particularly effective expression, though one that remains rather underestimated, of that tradition in the mid-eighteenth century was Micajah Towgood's *A Dissent from the Church of England fully justified*, published in 1753 as the distillation of his earlier thoughts and reaching an eleventh edition in 1809.[70] Of those Dissenters who followed Towgood's line of argument, one of the most persuasive was Thomas Mole, a predecessors of Richard Price as minister to the Gravel Pit Meeting, Hackney. In *The Case of a Dissent and Separation from a Civil Establishment of the Christian Religion fairly stated* he asserted:

> A Dissenter is a character in perfect consistence with the divine establishment of the Christian religion, to which we are sincere and intire conformists, and stands in opposition to that of *assenters* and *consenters* in a civil establishment, who are *nonconformists* to the word of God.[71]

Priestley regarded apostasy from that tradition, such as that committed by Benjamin Dawson, with the same intense disapproval as that which Blackburne reserved for seceders from the established Church. This was one reason why his controversy with Samuel Badcock (1747-88) during the 1780s was tinged with a particular measure of acidity because Badcock was not only a Dissenting minister who conformed to the Church but, in his earlier capacity, had contributed to Priestley's *Theological Repository*. He lamented in 1784 `At one time no man was more attached to me than Mr. Badcock. He took a journey of 100 miles to see me. But finding it necessary, (in order to make his peace with his orthodox friends,) he renounced all correspondence with me and other heretics'.[72]

It was not Priestley nor Dawson, but Lindsey, together with his fellow seceders from the Church of England such as John Disney, Edward Harries, John Hammond, William Frend and (a little later) Francis Stone who straddled the divide between Latitudinarianism and Dissent.[73] Even in 1780, after six years as a Unitarian minister in London, he could admit that he still had, as he put it, something of `the habits of a Churchman upon me'.[74] He retained a lifelong commitment to liturgical worship (with a reformed Liturgy, drawn of course from the impeccably Latitudinarian Samuel Clarke) and never adopted the extempore approach preferred by Dissenters. He continued to retain close links with non-resigning Anglican clergy such as Edmund Law, Christopher Wyvill, William Frend (until his deprivation from his college fellowship) and Robert Edward Garnham in Cambridge. Perhaps there was even a hint of affectation when in October 1774 he wrote of himself and William Turner of Wakefield as `us dissenters'.[75]

But it was Priestley, not Lindsey, who most clearly - even brutally - revealed the complexity of the affinity between Latitudinarianism and Dissent and its ultimate

fracture. As a controversialist, Priestley's primary commitment was to candour, courteously conducted, but unyielding in principle. He would never be, in Thomas Mole's words, `a nonconformist to the word of God'. Integrity was more important than the `politeness' which sections of the English elite made into something of a cult in the eighteenth century. Towards the end of Priestley's life, Latitudinarianism was frightened by the French Revolution to the extent of receding from its previous radicalism. There were few episcopal successors to bishops such as Jonathan Shipley, Edmund Law, John Hinchliffe and Richard Watson. Henry Bathurst of Norwich is a distinctly rare exception (and even he secured no further translation). The ramifications of Priestley's controversy with Benjamin Dawson lend more support to Dr Fitzpatrick's somewhat pessimistic diagnosis of the dilemmas of Latitudinarianism than to Dr Gascoigne's rather more cheerful assessment of its condition in the later eighteenth century.

There remained, of course areas of intellectual common ground between nineteenth-century Broad Churchmen and English Unitarians, and between the Whiggishly-inclined Noetics of Oriel College and the leading lights of liberal Dissent. But the furore surrounding the decision in 1838 of Edward Maltby, bishop of Durham, to subscribe to a book of sermons published by the Unitarian William Turner of Newcastle upon Tyne emphasised the gulf which existed between that period and the mid-eighteenth century. Nine years later criticisms of the appointment of R.D. Hampden as bishop of Hereford were similarly revealing. The expansion of evangelical Dissent, much of it determinedly Calvinist, together with the renewed perception of nonconformity as a threat in the post-1789 world, ended the older and more comfortable, types of relationships between Church and Dissent.

Even at the height of their disagreement in 1772, Lindsey could write of Priestley, `Whatever others do, our Friend does not put his candle under a bushel, but boldly and honestly holds it up, *in his own hand*, to give light to others as well as himself'.[76] The light of Priestley's illumination was sometimes harsh. But one feature of the ecclesiastical landscape upon which it fell has been the theme of this chapter. An understanding of the affinity between Latitudinarianism and Dissent may be regarded as one of his legacies. It is particularly fitting that recognition should be accorded to it at a conference held in Dr Williams's Library. There, in the presence of so many of Priestley's books and manuscripts – not to mention his portraits – one can say with confidence - `Si monumentum requiris, circumspice': if you seek his monument, look around you'.

JOSEPH PRIESTLEY AND THE COMPLEXITIES OF LATITUDINARIANISM IN THE 1770s[77]

G.M. Ditchfield

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The most important of Priestley's own works for the theme of this chapter are:

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G.M. Ditchfield, `The Preceptor of Nations: Joseph Priestley and Theophilus Lindsey', *TUHS*, 23, no. 2 (April 2004), 495-512

[1] I am grateful to those who took part in the discussion at the Priestley conference on 5 March 2005 for their valuable contributions to the discussion which followed the papers. In particular I have benefited from the comments of Martin Fitzpatrick, Isabel Rivers and David Wykes. I wish to thank my fellow trustees of Dr Williams's Library, and the Literary and Philosophical Society of Newcastle upon Tyne for permission to quote from manuscripts in their possession. Quotations from the letters of Theophilus Lindsey to William Tayleur are reproduced by courtesy of the University Librarian and Director, the John Rylands University Library, The University of Manchester. Part of the research for this paper was financed by a grant from the British Academy, which I acknowledge with gratitude.

[2] Rutt, I, i, 223, n. §§.

[3] Priestley, *Remarks on the Monthly Review of the Letters to Dr Horsley* (Birmingham, 1784), 24-5. The `present Reviewer' was Samuel Badcock; his `predecessors' were the authors of the *Monthly Review*'s articles on Lindsey's *Apology… on resigning the vicarage of Catterick* (London, 1774) and his

Historical View of the State of the Unitarian Doctrine and Worship (London, 1783).

[4] This was a view shared by Lindsey, all the more strongly in the light of the Dissenting connections of the *Monthly Review*.

[5] John Rylands University Library (JRUL), Lindsey Letters, Vol. I, nos. 22-3: Lindsey to William Tayleur, 3 December 1778.

[6] See John Spurr, "Latitudinarianism" and the Restoration Church', *Hist. Jnl*., 31 (1988), 61-82.

[7] See, especially, John Gascoigne, *Cambridge in the Age of the Enlightenment. Science, Religion and Politics from the Restoration to the French Revolution* (Cambridge, 1989), chs 2-3.

[8] See, in particular, B.W. Young, *Religion and Enlightenment in Eighteenth-Century England. Theological Debate from Locke to Burke* (Oxford, 1998).

[9] Martin Fitzpatrick, `Latitudinarianism at the parting of the ways: a suggestion', in John Walsh, Colin Haydon and Stephen Taylor (eds), *The Church of England c.1689-c.1833. From Toleration to Tractarianism* (Cambridge, 1993), 209-227, quotation from 209.

[10] Fitzpatrick, `Latitudinarianism', 210.

[11] See William Gibson, *Enlightenment Prelate: Benjamin Hoadly, 1676-1761* (Cambridge: James Clarke & Co., 2004), 67ff.

[12] Benjamin Hoadly, *The reasonableness of conformity to the Church of England, represented to the dissenting ministers. In answer to the tenth chapter of Mr. Calamy's abridgement of Mr. Baxter's History of his Life and Times, Part II* (2nd ed., London, 1703), 114.

[13] For an example of such co-operation at local level, involving Whig and Tory interests, see Adrian Wilson, `Conflict, Consensus and Charity: Politics and the Provincial Voluntary Hospitals in the eighteenth century', *English Historical Review*, 111 (1996), 599-619.

[14] W.M. Spellman, *The Latitudinarians and the Church of England, 1660-1700* (Athens, Georgia, 1993).

[15] J.C.D. Clark, *English Society 1660-1832. Religion, Ideology and Politics during the Ancien Regime* (Cambridge, 2000), ch. 4; John Gascoigne, `Anglican Latitudinarianism and political radicalism in the late eighteenth century', *History*, 71 (1986).

[16] F. L. Cross (ed.), E.A. Livingstone (revised), *The Oxford Dictionary of the Christian Church* (3rd ed., revised, Oxford, 2005), 961. It is a matter for surprise that the entry for `Latitudinarianism' in this important volume consists of only 76 words.

[17] James E. Bradley, *Religion, Revolution and English Radicalism. Non-conformity in Eighteenth-Century Politics and Society* (Cambridge, 1990), 113.

[18] See Andrew Lacey, *The Cult of King Charles the Martyr* (Woodbridge, 2003).

[19] Bradley, *Religion, Revolution and English Radicalism*, ch. 10.

[20] For Dawson's career, see Brian Young's entry in the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography***,** XV, 546-7. Dawson was rector of Burgh from 1760 until his death in 1814.

[21] *Free Thoughts on the Subject of a farther reformation of the Church of England; In Six Numbers: to which are added, the Remarks of the Editor. By the Author of a Short and safe Expedient for terminating the present Debates about Subscription. Published by Benjamin Dawson, LL.D* (London, 1771).

[22] Dawson's preface to *Free Thoughts* (unpaginated),

[23] Ibid.

[24] Dawson published a series of pamphlets in support of Blackburne, of which the most notable was *An Answer to Letters concerning Established Confessions of Faith; being a Vindication of The Confessional* (London, 1769).

[25] Francis Blackburne, *The Confessional: or, a full and free inquiry into the right, utility, edification and success, of established confessions of faith and doctrine in protestant churches* (3rd ed., enlarged, London 1770), p. vi.

[26] See the (incomplete) list of signatories to the Feathers Tavern petition in the *Monthly Repository*, XIII (1818), 15-18, with Dawson's name under the county of Suffolk, 17

[27] Priestley, *Considerations on Church-Authority; occasioned by Dr Balguy's Sermon on that Subject* (London, 1769), p. 85.

[28] Dawson's edition of *Free Thoughts*, 149.

[29] Philip Taylor, quoted in Dawson's edition of *Free Thoughts,* 151. Taylor (1747-1831) was assistant minister, then minister, at Kaye Street chapel, Liverpool, 1767-77 and minister at Eustace Street, Dublin, 1777-1831. His fellow-pupil Robert Gore (?1748-79) was minister at Cross Street chapel, Manchester, 1770-79.

[30] Priestley, `Letter of Advice', Rutt, XXII¸ 466.

[31] Ibid., 467.

[32] Ibid., 467.

[33] Ibid., 467-8.

[34] Dawson, *Letter to the Clergy of the Archdeaconry of Winchester* (London, 1773), 37.

[35] Ibid.

[36] Ibid., p. 10.

[37] Ibid., p. 48.

[38] Priestley, `Letter of Advice', Rutt, XXII, 441, where Priestley described himself as `a silent but not an uninterested spectator'.

[39] Priestley to Lindsey, 2 March 1772; Rutt, I i, 160.

[40] DWL MS 12.44, (11), Lindsey to William Turner of Wakefield, 5 January 1774.

[41] See in particular Doddridge's *Free Thoughts on the most probable means of reviving the Dissenting Interest* (London, 1730).

[42] *The Correspondence of Richard Price*, eds D.O. Thomas and Bernard Peach (2 vols., Durham, N.C. and Cardiff, 1983-94, II, 33

[43] This was something which Lindsey recognised; `For these rational Dissenters as they are called are manifestly crumbling away every day, and they and their families sliding back into the Trinitarian worship of the Ch. of E'; JRUL: Lindsey Letters, Vol. I, no. 34: Lindsey to William Tayleur, 29 November 1780).

[44] For the background to this controversy, see Richard Burgess Barlow, *Citizenship and Conscience. A Study in the Theory and Practice of religious Toleration in England during the eighteenth century* (Philadelphia, 1962), 160-170.

[45] DWL MS 12.44 (6), Lindsey to Turner, 2 June 1772. On 23 June 1772 Lindsey added `I have not seen Peckard's sermon; but I am told it is but a trimming one' (D.W.L., MS 12.44 (7)). See John Walsh, `Peter Peckard. Liberal Churchman' in John Walsh and Ronald Hyam, *Peter Peckard. Liberal Churchman and anti-slave campaigner* (Magdalene College Occasional Paper, No. 16 (Magdalene College, Cambridge, 1998), 1-14. See also Young, *Religion and Enlightenment*, 59-62.

[46] Martin Fitzpatrick, `Joseph Priestley and universal toleration,' *Price-Priestley Newsletter,* No. I (1977).

[47] See Colin Haydon, *Anti-Catholicism in eighteenth-century England. A Political and Social Study* (Manchester, 1993), 191ff.

[48] G.M. Ditchfield, `Testaments of faith: A comment on some Unitarian wills in the age of Theophilus Lindsey', *Transactions of the Unitarian Historical Society*, (*TUHS*), 22 (April, 2000), 133.

[49] Priestley to Lindsey, 18 Dec. 1769; Rutt, I, i, 104-105.

[50] Lindsey, *A Farewel Address to the parishioners of Catterick* (London, 1773), 5

[51] G.M.Ditchfield, `"Incompatible with the very name of Christian": English Catholics and Unitarians in the age of John Milner', *Recusant History*, 25 (May 2000), 52-73.

[52] Dawson, *Letter to clergy of the archdeaconry of Winchester*, 4-5, 43.

[53] DWL MS 12.44 (5), Lindsey to Turner, 12 April 1772.

[54] Priestley to Lindsey, April 1772; Rutt, I, i, 169.

[55] Priestley, *The Importance and Extent of Free Enquiry in Matters of Religion* (Birmingham, 1785), pp. 40-1.

[56] Literary and Philosophical Society of Newcastle upon Tyne (LPN), MS 59 (c), Lindsey to William Turner, 24 April 1772.

[57] Priestley to Lindsey, `about April 1772'; Rutt, I, i, 167-8.

[58] Lindsey to John Jebb, 2 March 1773; Rutt, I, i, 235, n. †.

[59] This work was Priestley's *Letter of Advice to those Dissenters who conduct the Application to Parliament for Relief from certain penal Laws, with various Observations relating to similar Subjects*, published in 1773.

[60] LPN MS 59 (g), Lindsey to Turner, 10 August 1773.

[61] DWL MS 12.44 (9) , Lindsey to Turner, October 1773.

[62] Lindsey to Jebb, 2 March 1773; Rutt, I, i, 235, n. †.

[63] See G.M. Ditchfield, `The Preceptor of Nations: Joseph Priestley and Theophilus Lindsey', *TUHS*, 23, no. 2 (April 2004), 495-512.

[64] Letter of `A.B.', dated `Chelmsford, Oct. 5', *General Evening Post*, 17-19 October 1771.

[65] Lindsey to Joshua Toulmin, 28 November 1782; Thomas Belsham, *Memoirs of the Late Reverend Theophilus Lindsey* (Centenary ed., 1873), 100.

[66] DWL MS 12.52 (32), Blackburne to Lindsey, 14 February 1757.

[67] A point made by Isabel Rivers, *Reason, Grace, and Sentiment. A Study of the Language of Religion and Ethics in England, 1660-1780* (Cambridge, 2000), p. 350.

[68] Priestley, *The Proper Constitution of a Christian Church, considered in a Sermon preached at the New Meeting in Birmingham, November 3, 1782* (Birmingham, 1782), p. ix.

[69] Priestley, *Considerations on Church-Authority*, p. 61.

[70] Moreover Towgood was one of the first authors to use the term `Rational Dissenters' in a manner that would have been recognizable to Priestley'. Towgood (1700-92) was minister of James's meeting (from 1760 George's meeting), Exeter, from 1750-82.

[71] Thomas Mole, *The Case of a Dissent* (London, 1772), 158.

[72] Priestley to Caleb Rotheram, 28 February 1784; Rutt, I i, 374. See also *Gentleman's Magazine*, LVIII (ii), 868-70 and 781-83. Badcock had served as a Dissenting minister at Barnstaple but was best known as a contributor to the *Monthly Review*.

[73] See G.M. Ditchfield, `Feathers Tavern petitioners (act. 1771-1774)', O*xford Dictionary of National Biography*, online edn., Oxford University Press, January

2006 [http:// www oxforddnb.com/view/theme/93823, accessed document.write 10 April 2006].

[74] JRUL, Lindsey Letters, Vol. I, no. 34, Lindsey to William Tayleur, 29 November 1780.

[75] DWL MS 12.44 (20).

[76] LPN MS 59 (c), Lindsey to Turner, 24 April 1772.