

MEMOIRS

OF

DR. JOSEPH PRIESTLEY,

TO THE YEAR 1795,

WRITTEN BY HIMSELF:

WITH A CONTINUATION, TO THE TIME OF HIS DECEASE,

BY HIS SON, JOSEPH PRIESTLEY:

AND OBSERVATIONS ON HIS WRITINGS,

By THOMAS COOPER, PRESIDENT JUDGE OF THE

4TH DISTRICT OF PENNSYLVANIA: AND THE

REV. WILLIAM CHRISTIE.

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characters that I was ever acquainted with, having a cultivated comprehensive mind, equal to any subject of theology or metaphysics, intrepid in the cause of truth, and most rationally pious.

Spending so much of my time in London was the means of increasing my intimacy with both Mr. Lindsey and Mr. Lee, our common friend; who amidst the bustle of politics, always preserved his attachment to theology, and the cause of truth. The Sunday I always spent with Mr. Lindsey, attending the service of his chapel, and sometimes officiating for him; and with him and Mrs. Lindsey I generally spent the evening of that day at Mr. Lee's who then admitted no other company, and seldom have I enjoyed society with more relish.

My winter's residence in London was the means of improving my acquaintance with Dr. Franklin. I was seldom many days without seeing him, and being members of the same club, we constantly returned together. The difference with America breaking out at this time, our conversation was chiefly of a political nature; and I can bear witness, that he was so far from promoting, as was generally supposed, that he took every method in his power to prevent a rupture

ture between the two countries. He urged so much the doctrine of forbearance, that for some time he was unpopular with the Americans on that account, as too much a friend to Great Britain. His advice to them was to bear every thing for the present, as they were sure in time to out grow all their grievances ; as it could not be in the power of the mother country to oppress them long.

He dreaded the war, and often said that, if the difference should come to an open rupture, it would be a war of *ten years*, and he should not live to see the end of it. In reality the war lasted near eight years but he did live to see the happy termination of it. That the issue would be favorable to America, he never doubted. The English, he used to say, may take all our great towns, but that will not give them possession of the country. The last day that he spent in England, having given out that he should leave London the day before, we passed together, without any other company ; and much of the time was employed in reading American newspapers, especially accounts of the reception which the *Boston port bill* met with in America ; and as he read the addresses to the inhabitants of Boston from the places

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in the neighbourhood, the tears trickled down his cheeks.\*

It is much to be lamented, that a man of Dr. Franklin's general good character, and great influence, should have been an unbeliever in christianity, and also have done so much as he did to make others unbelievers. To me, however, he acknowledged that he had not given so much attention as he ought to have done to the evidences of christianity, and desired me to recommend to him a few treatises on the subject, such as I thought most deserving of his notice, but not of great length, promising to read them, and give me his sentiments on them. Accordingly, I recommended to him Hartley's evidences of christianity in his Observations on Man, and what I had then written on the subject in my Institutes of natural and revealed religion. But the American war breaking out soon after, I do not believe that he ever found himself sufficiently at leisure for the discussion. I have kept up a correspondence with him occasionally ever since, and three  
of his

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\* For two letters written by my father relating to Dr. Franklin and Mr Burke see appendix No. 6.

of his letters to me were, with his consent, published in his *Miscellaneous Works*, in quarto. The first of them, written immediately on his landing in America, is very striking.

About three years before the dissolution of my connection with Lord Shelburne, Dr. Fothergill, with whom I had always lived on terms of much intimacy, having observed, as he said, that many of my experiments had not been carried to their proper extent on account of the expence that would have attended them, proposed to me a subscription from himself and some of his friends, to supply me with whatever sums I should want for that purpose, and named a hundred pounds per annum. This large subscription I declined, lest the discovery of it (by the use that I should, of course, make of it) should give umbrage to Lord Shelburne, but I consented to accept of 40 £. per annum, which from that time he regularly paid me, from the contribution of himself, Sir Theodore Jansen, Mr. Constable, and Sir George Saville.

On my leaving Lord Shelburne, which was attended with the loss of one half of my income, Dr. Fothergill proposed an enlargement of my allowance