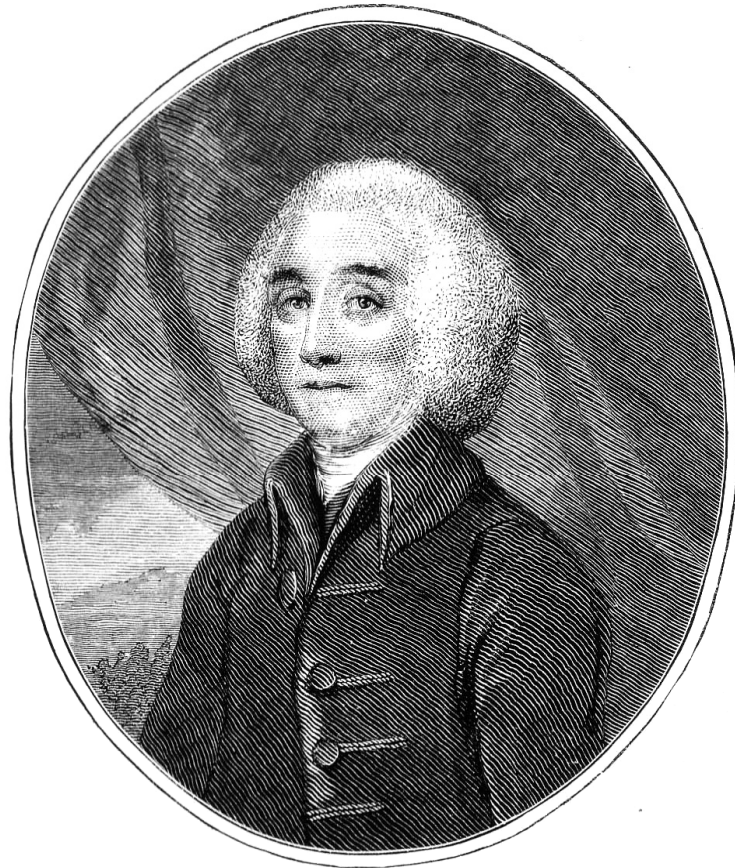


# WORSHIP RESOURCE MATERIAL FROM THE **WORSHIP PANEL**

Recognising the bicentenary of the death of Theophilus Lindsey



REV. THEOPHILUS LINDSEY, M.A.

## **Theophilus Lindsey (1723-1808) – The Reluctant Dissenter?**

In November 2008 we will be celebrating the bicentenary of the death of Theophilus Lindsey in 1808. Was he just a pious and learned minister or one of the most controversial and important clergymen of the later eighteenth century? Can these two views be reconciled? Lindsey left the Anglican Church in 1773, finding that he could no longer subscribe to the creeds of the church, and moved to London. In April 1774 he established the first avowedly unitarian congregation in the country, based in a converted auction room in Essex Street, just off The Strand. Would the Unitarian denomination in Britain exist today without him?

# Contents

Thumbnail Sketch	1
Historical Overview <i>by Howard Hague</i>	3
The Life of Theophilus Lindsey	3
Catterick and the Feathers Tavern Petition	3
London and the Opening of Essex Street Chapel	4
An Analysis of Lindsey's Life and Work	4
Readings – Extracts from Lindsey's (and other) Writings	5
The Reason for Lindsey's Resignation from the Church of England	5
On the Opening of the Essex Street Chapel – 17 April 1774	5
Press Report on the Opening of Essex Street Chapel, 1774	6
Lindsey's Views on the American War of Independence	6
Lindsey's Views on God, Christ and the Trinity	6
On Heretics	7
Other Resources	7
Hymns	7
Websites of Interest	7
CD ROM	8
Further Reading	8
Worship Material from the UUA WorshipWeb Site:	8
Words for Worship	9
Story: Theophilus Lindsey and His Bag of Half-Pennies <i>by Sarah Tinker</i>	9
Ideas for using this story in worship <i>by Sarah Tinker</i>	9
Opening Words and Chalice Lighting <i>by Daniel Hughes</i>	10
Prayer <i>by Daniel Hughes</i>	10
Reflection <i>by Daniel Hughes</i>	11
Closing Words <i>by Daniel Hughes</i>	11
A Prayer for a Church History Service <i>by Sarah Tinker</i>	12

# Historical Overview

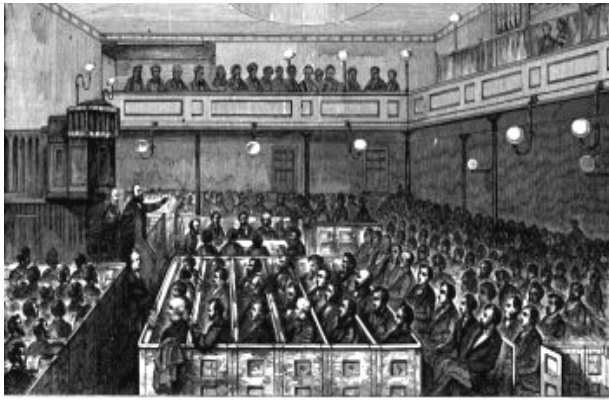
## The Life of Theophilus Lindsey

He was born in Middlewich, Cheshire on 20 June 1723 and his father was Robert Lindsey, a mercer and part-owner of a salt-works. He was named after his godfather, Theophilus, Earl of Huntingdon, who was the husband of Selina, Countess of Huntingdon (the well-known patroness of Whitefield and the Calvinistic Methodists). Lindsey's mother Jane, before her marriage, had been a member of the Huntingdon household. After initial schooling in Middlewich, where he showed early promise, it was arranged that he would enter the free grammar school, Leeds. Under the influence of the master there, Thomas Barnard, he began to prepare for a university education and a clerical career. His connections with Yorkshire were to prove important for him. Two of his later parishes in the Church of England were situated there, and among his closest friends were Francis Blackburne, archdeacon of Cleveland, the dissenting minister William Turner of Wakefield and the lawyer and politician (and later Attorney-General) John Lee, who was a native of Leeds.

Lindsey was admitted to St John's College Cambridge in 1741, receiving financial support from several quarters. He graduated BA in 1744, MA in 1748, and was a fellow of the college from 1747 to 1755. Destined for a career in the church, he was ordained deacon in 1746. In 1747 he became morning preacher at the Wheler Chapel, Spitalfields, London, and was ordained priest later that year. He also served as domestic chaplain to the Duke of Somerset, and accompanied the future Duke of Northumberland on a trip to France as tutor. He became rector at Kirby Wiske in North Yorkshire in 1752, and vicar of Piddletown in Dorset in 1755. In 1760 Lindsey married Hannah Elsworth (1740-1812), the step-daughter of Francis Blackburne, archdeacon of Cleveland, in Richmond parish church (Yorkshire). She was to prove his lifelong companion and supporter in all he did, including his move to a unitarian<sup>[1]</sup> position. As early as 1755 Lindsey had experienced his first crisis of conscience with regard to subscription to the Thirty-Nine Articles, and whether he could remain within the church. By his marriage to Hannah he acquired as father-in-law one of the leading latitudinarian clergymen in the country, whose writings and views were to exert a major influence over his career. Nevertheless Blackburne generally advised him to remain within the church, reminding him that "you must have bread".

## Catterick and the Feathers Tavern Petition

Despite dedicated service in Piddletown, Lindsey was anxious to be nearer his wife's family and his friends in Yorkshire, and in November 1763 became vicar of Catterick, where he was to remain for ten years. During his time there he was highly conscientious in his work as a clergyman, and became one of the first exponents of Sunday school teaching, assisted by his wife. In 1769 Lindsey met Joseph Priestley, then minister at Mill Hill Chapel in Leeds, and this marked the beginning of their long theological co-operation. He had also met William Turner, minister of the Westgate Chapel in Wakefield, who was to become one of his most valued correspondents over many years. These contacts could not fail to re-awaken his doctrinal scruples. During his time at Catterick, Lindsey had decided that, like Blackburne, he would accept no further preferment within the church. However he decided not to resign his living immediately, but to launch a campaign for ecclesiastical reform. The Feathers Tavern petition of 1772 sought the abolition of subscription to the Thirty-Nine Articles for clergymen and for those graduating from Oxford and Cambridge universities. Some 250 clergy signed the petition, but the House of Commons rejected it by a large majority. Shortly afterwards Lindsey began to prepare for resignation from the Church of England. Writing to the Bishop of Chester in 1773, he said: "I am so persuaded of the strict unity of God, taught by Moses and the prophets, and last of all by our Saviour Christ, that I should hold it impiety in me to continue to worship Christ, or any other being or person." He resigned as vicar of Catterick in November 1773. Turning down an offer from the Earl of Huntingdon to become his librarian, Lindsey and his wife arrived in London in January 1774, taking modest lodgings in Holborn.



*Interior of Essex Street Chapel,  
from Centenary Service 1874*

## London and the Opening of Essex Street Chapel

Supported by his friends, Lindsey determined to open a chapel, and a room was leased in Essex House, near The Strand, from Samuel Paterson, an auctioneer. The publisher Joseph Johnson was instrumental in securing this room, though the registration of the chapel was to prove more complicated. The opening of the chapel on Sunday 17 April 1774 was reported widely in the London and provincial press. The tone of these reports was generally sympathetic, with emphasis on the scruples of conscience that led him to resign from the

church, on the respectability of his audience and the decorum of the service. Those attending included Benjamin Franklin, Joseph Priestley, Sir George Savile MP, the attorney John Lee (later Solicitor-General) and Lord Le Despencer (the former Sir Francis Dashwood). Lindsey's ministry quickly established itself, and it was resolved to erect a permanent chapel. Other suitable premises not being found, the freehold of Essex House was purchased in May 1777, thanks to generous financial contributions from supporters. After extensive re-building work, the new chapel was formally opened on 29 March 1778. Lindsey remained minister until his resignation in 1793, being succeeded by the Rev Dr John Disney, who had been his assistant minister since 1783, and who had himself left the Church of England. In 1783 he published *An Historical View of the State of Unitarian Doctrine and Worship from the Reformation to our Times*. He continued to live at Essex House with his wife Hannah until his death on 3 November 1808, and was buried in the Bunhill Fields Dissenters' Cemetery, where his tomb can be seen today. Hannah died in 1812, and was buried in the same tomb.

## An Analysis of Lindsey's Life and Work

Lindsey was always disappointed at the small number of other Anglican clergy who left the church, following his example. His purposes remained the same: to encourage liturgical reform within the church, and to establish unitarianism within the mainstream of protestant Christianity. He succeeded in making his views accessible to sections of the reading public through his theological works, and his reformed prayer book was an important contribution to unitarian liturgical practice. The book *Memorable Unitarians* (1906) calls Lindsey, Joseph Priestley and Thomas Belsham 'the three fathers of modern Unitarianism'. Although he avoided political content in his sermons, his private views as revealed in his letters were perhaps surprisingly radical, for example his support for the American revolution.

Professor Grayson Ditchfield sums up Lindsey's contribution as follows: "By his inspiration of the Feathers Tavern Petition against clerical subscription to the thirty-nine articles (1771-72) he provoked one of the most profound debates within the eighteenth-century Church of England. By his anti-trinitarian convictions and consequent resignation as Vicar of Catterick in 1773 he helped to further the emergence of Unitarianism as a separate denomination and made his chapel at Essex Street, off the Strand in central London, a focus both for theological and political radicalism. He served as a point of contact for relations between many other significant figures, both Anglican and Dissenting, notably Francis Blackburne, William Frend, Christopher Wyvill, Joseph Priestley and Richard Price."

**Acknowledgement:** I am indebted to advice from Professor Ditchfield of the University of Kent, and have relied heavily on the introduction contained in his recent publication *The Letters of Theophilus Lindsey, Volume 1: 1747-1788* (The Boydell Press, 2007).

**Howard Hague**

[1] unitarian with a small 'u' denotes a theological position; a capital 'U' generally refers to the denomination.

# Readings – Extracts from Lindsey’s (and other) Writings

## The Reason for Lindsey’s Resignation from the Church of England

From a letter to William Markham, the Bishop of Chester, November 1773:

“It was natural for your Lordship ... to bid me beware of precipitation in a matter of such moment. But though suddenly and so lately communicated to your Lordship, this resolution is no hasty step, but the result of many years’ anxious enquiry and deliberation, and trying every expedient that might give me ease. And my faith is built not on a system of philosophy, but on an impartial examination of the mind and will of God, as discovered in the Old and New Testament. And I am constrained on this occasion to tell your Lordship, that I am so persuaded of the strict unity of God, taught by Moses and the prophets, and last of all by our Saviour Christ, that though no one is further from condemning others that differ, I should hold it impiety in me to continue to worship Christ, or any other being or person. I cannot, therefore, continue to lead the devotions of a congregation in the Church of England, who esteem it sinful in myself constantly to use that worship and abet it ... Whatever be the distressing consequences of this determination with regard to worldly things, I can never repent of it, as led to it by no motive but a desire to approve myself to God, and what my duty to him required.”

Quoted from *The Letters of Theophilus Lindsey, Volume 1: 1747-1788*, edited by G.M. Ditchfield, (The Boydell Press, 2007), p 167

## On the Opening of the Essex Street Chapel – 17 April 1774

The following remarks are from a letter written by Lindsey to John Jebb on 18 April 1774:

“You will be pleased to hear that everything passed very well yesterday; a larger and much more respectable audience than I could have expected, who behaved with great decency, and in general appeared, and many of them expressed themselves, to be much satisfied with the whole of the service. Some disturbance was apprehended, and forboded to me by great names – but not the least movement of the kind. The only fault found with it was that it was too small. From impressions that seemed to be made, and the general seriousness and satisfaction, I am persuaded that this attempt will, through the divine blessing, be of singular usefulness. The contrast between ours and the church service strikes every one. Forgive me for saying, that I should have blushed to have appeared in a white garment. No one seemed in the least to want it. I am happy not to be hampered with anything, but entirely easy and satisfied with the whole of the service; a satisfaction never before known. I must again say it, and bless God for it, that we were enabled to begin well. And we only desire to go on as through his blessing we have begun. I must mention one circumstance of yesterday to you and Mrs J[ebb], and confidential friends: that Lord Le Despenser was at our chapel yesterday: whether he will come again we cannot say, but he has subscribed handsomely towards indemnifying us for the expenses of the chapel, etc.”

Quoted in Thomas Belsham’s *Memoirs of the Late Reverend Theophilus Lindsey: the Centenary Volume*. (London, Williams and Norgate, 1873), p71

**Note:** Lord Le Despenser, perhaps better known as Sir Francis Dashwood, the owner of West Wycombe Park in Buckinghamshire (and founder of the so-called ‘Hell-Fire Club’ in his younger days), was Postmaster-General from 1766-1781. He and Benjamin Franklin, a friend, had published a simplified version of the Book of Common Prayer in 1773.

## Press Report on the Opening of Essex Street Chapel, 1774

From the *Public Advertiser* of 18 April 1774:

“Yesterday Morning a Chapel for Divine Worship was opened at Essex House, Essex Street, in the Strand, on the Plan of a reformed Book of Common Prayer, by the Rev. Mr. Lindsey, late Vicar of Catteric in Yorkshire, which Benefice (from conscientious Principles) he has lately resigned. The new Book of Prayer, offered in the Consideration of all well-disposed Christians, contains many pious and judicious Alterations of the Church Service, nearly on the Model recommended by the celebrated Dr Samuel Clarke, formerly Rectr of St James’s. The Congregation was respectable and numerous; the Service was performed with the greatest Solemnity, Decency and Decorum; and the Auditors seemed to be particularly pleased with the Spirit of Moderation, Candour and Christian Benevolence of the Preacher, whose Sermon was perfectly well adapted to the Occasion. The text was from Ephes. Ch. 4, v. iii ‘Endeavouring to keep the Unity of the Spirit in the Bond of Peace.’”

Quoted from *The Letters of Theophilus Lindsey, Volume 1: 1747-1788*, edited by G.M. Ditchfield (The Boydell Press, 2007), p. lv-lvi

## Lindsey’s Views on the American War of Independence

From a letter to William Turner of Wakefield, 7 December 1774

“Farewel to Old England’s greatness, if the sword is drawn and blood shed in America. What will three battalions or 30 battalions do? But our infatuation is astonishing. Not the least symptom of kindness or humanity towards our brethren in America from the throne, or in the speeches of the Ministerial people, but all war and vengeance. ... Nothing but calamity seems capable to awaken us out of our unfeelingness towards justice and our true interests: And that seems to be coming.”

Quoted from *The Letters of Theophilus Lindsey, Volume 1: 1747-1788*, edited by G.M. Ditchfield (The Boydell Press, 2007), p. 201

## Lindsey’s Views on God, Christ and the Trinity

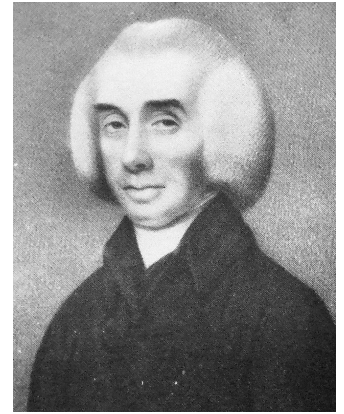
- 1) That there is ONE GOD, one single person, who is God, the sole creator and sovereign lord of all things;
- 2) That the holy JESUS was a man of the Jewish nation, the servant of this God, highly honoured and distinguished by him; and
- 3) That the SPIRIT, or HOLY SPIRIT was not a person, or intelligent being; but only the extraordinary power or gift of God, imparted, first (Acts i. 2) to our Lord Jesus Christ himself, in his life-time; and, afterwards, to the apostles, and many of the first Christians, to empower them to preach and propagate the gospel with success; and
- 4) That this was the doctrine concerning God, and Christ, and the Holy Spirit, which was taught by the apostles, and preached to Jews and heathens.

From *A second address to the students of Oxford and Cambridge relating to Jesus Christ and the origin of the great errors concerning him* (London, 1790), quoted from *The Epic of Unitarianism* by David B. Parke (Boston, Skinner House Books, 1985) , p47

## On Heretics

“But whoever reads the annals of ecclesiastical history with an impartial eye, and will not suffer himself to be governed by names and sounds, will soon perceive, that from the days of Constantine to the present times, those called heretics by their adversaries, have generally been the honest few, who have ventured to search the holy scriptures for themselves, and openly to profess the truth of God which they there learned, in opposition to popular error.”

Quoted from *Unitarian Teachers* (London, The Lindsey Press, 1923), p. 7



*Theophilus Lindsey*

## Other Resources:

### Hymns:

Some of these hymns have been chosen because of their theme and others because they may well have been sung at Essex Street Chapel, particularly perhaps hymns written by Isaac Watts, whose work was popular at that time.

From Hymns for Living (HL) and Hymns of Faith and Freedom (HFF):

Be true, live truly	(155:HL, 308:HFF)
Faith of the free	(134:HL)
Flame of living fire	(113:HL, 77:HFF)
For all the saints, who from their labours rest	(79:HL, 244:HFF)
From all that dwell	(310:HL, 474:HFF)
Joy to the world, for peace shall come	(96:HL, 128:HFF)
Life of ages, richly poured	(120:HL, 80:HFF)
O for that flame of living fire	(113:HL, 77:HFF)
O God, our help in ages past	(65:HL, 339:HFF)
O help the prophet to be bold	(138:HL, 317:HFF)
Praise Ye the Lord	(39:HFF)
Sing in celebration	(135:HL)
Sing we of the Golden City	(212:HL, 217:HFF)
Song of thanksgiving	(17:HL)
The spacious firmament	(232:HL, 63:HFF)
These things shall be!	(203:HL, 418:HFF)
We shall be strong and free	(137:HL)
Within this temple	(392:HFF)

### Websites of Interest:

[www.kent.ac.uk/history/research/Research-Projects/ditchfieldres.html](http://www.kent.ac.uk/history/research/Research-Projects/ditchfieldres.html)

[www.unitarianhistory.org.uk/hsalbPFU.html](http://www.unitarianhistory.org.uk/hsalbPFU.html) (*includes an illustration of Lindsey*)

[www.boydell.co.uk/43833441.HTM](http://www.boydell.co.uk/43833441.HTM) (*details of the recent volume of Lindsey's letters*)

## CD ROM:

*Memoirs of Theophilus Lindsey* by Thomas Belsham, published in 1812, relates the story of Lindsey's resignation from the Catterick vicarage and his journey to London to open Essex Street Chapel in 1774. It is a major primary source for information on Unitarianism in Great Britain as it develops into a denomination. ISBN 978-0-9551992-1-9, pp544. Price £6.

CD ROM may be ordered from Lensden Publishing, 63 Silverdale Road, Arnside, Cumbria, LA5 0DZ. Telephone: 01524 762 264. Email: DrLenSmith@lensden.fsnet.co.uk. The cost includes postage and packing within the UK. Cheques to be made payable to 'L. Smith' and all proceeds are for the Unitarian College, Manchester.



*Lindsey's tomb in Bunhill Fields Cemetery*

## Further Reading:

Ditchfield, G.M. 'A Unitarian Saint? Theophilus Lindsey 1723-1808' in *Transactions of the Unitarian Historical Society* Vol 24 No. 2, p. 81-99, April 2008

Ditchfield, G.M ed. *The Letters of Theophilus Lindsey, Volume 1: 1747-1788* (The Boydell Press, 2007)

Ditchfield, G.M *The Letters of Theophilus Lindsey and the Cause of Protestantism in Late Eighteenth-Century Britain* (Dr Williams's Trust, 2007)

## Worship Material from the UUA WorshipWeb Site:

**Website:** [www.uua.org/spirituallife/worshipweb/](http://www.uua.org/spirituallife/worshipweb/)

Wayne B Arnason	Meditation	<i>'We join together now in a time of mediation'</i>
Edward Frost	Affirmations	<i>'Unto that which is noblest in each of us'</i>
Andrew C Kennedy	Opening Words	<i>'We come to love a church'</i>
Priscilla Murdock	Reading/Meditation/Closing	<i>'For a church history service'</i>
Amanda Poppei	Prayer/Meditation	<i>'The home that love made'</i>
Clifford Martin Reed	Prayers	<i>'Now'</i>
Carl G Seaburg	Closing Words	<i>'Through our temporary lives'</i>
Rhys Williams	Closing Words	<i>'Remembering our spiritual, courageous ancestors'</i>

*If you do not have access to the internet please send a stamped addressed envelope to Sarah Tinker at Essex Church (112 Palace Gardens Terrace, London W8 4RT) with a note of the item that you would like a copy of.*



# Words for Worship

## Story: Theophilus Lindsey and His Bag of Half-Pennies

Sometimes it's not easy to get a sense of a historical figure as a real flesh and blood person. I first heard this small story about Theophilus Lindsey told by Derek Smith some years ago and it left me with a picture of a man who cared about theological matters but just as importantly cared about real people, especially the poor. The story also left me wanting to know more about Hannah Lindsey, who is described in a book called *Memorable Unitarians*, published in 1906:

*'Mr Lindsey always bears testimony that his wife was a woman of no common mind and no common moral courage. "My greatest comfort and support under God is my wife," says Lindsey, "who is a Christian indeed, and worthy of a better fate in worldly things than we have prospect of."*

Derek Smith told the story of how Lindsey returned to Yorkshire from London after the failure of the Feathers' Tavern petition. Before leaving London, he had visited the Royal Mint and there collected a bag of new half-pennies. On his return to his parish in Catterick in Yorkshire, Theophilus and Hannah gave the half-pennies to the children in their church to encourage them to be inoculated against smallpox.

Emily Sharpe, one of the founders of Channing School wrote, in her pamphlet *Four Unitarian Lives*, about Hannah and Theophilus' work amongst the poor of their parish:

*"The preparation that Mr and Mrs Lindsey were making for this coming event (his resignation) did not, however, prevent them from continuing the usual works of kindness and charity in the parish. Perhaps it rather quickened their zeal, and as the small-pox had been very fatal around them, they had during this last year the additional expense of inoculating all the children of the poor in their own large village and in the neighbouring hamlets. On most of these Mrs Lindsey attended in person, gave them their medicines, and was so successful that she did not lose a single patient."*

### ***Ideas for using this story in worship:***

- If using the story with teenagers you could consider the difference between bribes and rewards – bribes being used to encourage people to do wrong. You could explore with them their responses to being encouraged to behave in certain ways by the promise of a reward rather than being threatened with punishment – sticks or carrots as motivators.
- For example, there have been news reports recently about studies which show that people are far more likely to take part in recycling schemes if they are rewarded to do so rather than if they are threatened with fines for failing to recycle their rubbish.
- Younger children sometimes like to tell of the rewards they have received for going through difficult experiences such as music exams or vaccinations.

- Most children in the UK have experiences of vaccinations. Around the age of 11 they often have a BCG jab for TB, which may leave a small scar. The history of vaccinations eradicating certain diseases is a powerful story in itself and children may well have studied it in history lessons on the Victorian era or in geography lessons about developing countries.
- The government is planning a new vaccination programme for teenage girls, starting in the autumn of 2008, aimed at eradicating the human papilloma virus (HPV).
- Poor children in 1773 would rarely have had any money of their own. They would not have received pocket money and could only have made money if a richer person paid them to do a job. For example, a boy might have earned one penny for a morning chopping wood. So to receive a half-penny from the vicar would have made inoculation seem much more acceptable!

I have not been able to find out for certain how these children were inoculated. The vaccine against smallpox was created by Edward Jenner in the late 1790s. An earlier method of inoculation was introduced in England by Lady Montagu who learnt of it in Constantinople. Known as variolation, a small amount of virulent matter is taken from the skin of a person infected with a mild case of smallpox and is rubbed into a scratch on the skin of the person to be inoculated. They then develop a mild form of the illness, to which they are then subsequently immune. This was not an easy process and carried certain risks for everyone concerned.

Sarah Tinker

## Opening Words and Chalice Lighting

As we gather in this place of sacred connectedness,  
we are mindful of those who have gone before us.

We are mindful of our Unitarian ancestors, who suffered for freedom of thought and worship.

We are mindful of those who have contributed to our unfolding,

those who have nurtured the freedom that brought us to this open religious community.

We are mindful that every worship gathering is a space for support,  
free expression and growing in compassion.

*[Light chalice flame]*

May this flame shine within ourselves as brightly as it has within those who have gone before us.

So be it.

## Prayer

We bring our hearts and minds before that which is transcendent.

In the stillness, we allow ourselves to feel what is joyful or painful within our hearts this morning.

We acknowledge that joy or pain. We embrace that this is how we are now,  
bringing it before God, one symbol of acceptance.

*[Stillness]*

Knowing that we must accept ourselves fully, without the self-hate of judgment; we consider those times when we have behaved unlovingly in this past week. Unloving toward ourselves, strangers and those whom we love. In the stillness be forgiving, remembering that we learn not through guilt but by a desire to show greater love.

*[Stillness]*

For we are beings of love, despite what we may have been told, despite what we may have told ourselves. Let us then give thanks for the seeds of love in our hearts and arise from this time of prayer relishing our contribution to the world.

So be it.

## Reflection

*'Theophilus! You will lose the vicarage, your secure income, the social position and lifestyle. You surely could reinterpret the words within the Prayer Book. Be sensible. Think of Hannah.'*

Theophilus Lindsey ventured onto a path of uncertain trust as he stepped away from his secure and comfortable country parish life. We can only imagine that a sense of personal authenticity and a belief that he would inspire others counselled his decision. The companionship of his wife Hannah offering essential support as they opened, Essex Street Unitarian Chapel in 1774.

As we sit in our building with the same Unitarian name, (adapt to suit your particular circumstances) I invite you to consider if the promptings of your heart and mind are calling you in a new direction. In what direction do you need to travel? Ask this question, being open to your honest response. 'In what direction do I need to travel?'

*[Stillness]*

The knowledge of what you must do may be both liberating and painful. Take time to reflect but remember that those initial feelings and thoughts are often true. If your sense is one of having already arrived at your destination, be open to helping those who have yet to step out into that new world.

The thoughts of Theophilus may now be confined to books rarely read. However, Hannah's and his actions remain living examples of our need to keep moving on in life, ready to hear the call of pastures new, willing to respond to the call of the spirit or our time.

So be it.

## Closing Words

Remembering the insights and authenticity of our ancestors, we continue upon our path.

May the nourishment and stillness of this hour remain within our hearts.

May our lives be a blessing upon the world and those we meet this coming week.

Go in peace. Amen.

**All above words by Daniel Hughes**

## A Prayer for a Church History Service

Let us join now in a time of prayer and reflection as we think today of those who helped to found our congregation (*substitute words to fit your circumstances, naming individuals if appropriate*).

They lived in times so very different from our own. The freedoms we so often take for granted were not their freedoms. The issues they grappled with are unlikely to be the issues that we struggle with today.

Yet there is a bond that connects us with them across the span of centuries. We owe them our gratitude; gratitude for their example, their courage, their commitment to the cause of religious freedom.

Because they were prepared to take a stand for their beliefs, because they were willing to lose their livelihoods, and indeed sometimes their lives, we now have a place in which to worship and the freedom to follow our own beliefs. This very building is their legacy to us. May we cherish all that it represents.

May we also find ways to continue the work of our forebears. Many of their battles are now won yet there is always more to be done to help the progress of life here on earth. May we live in ways that honour the past and prepare for the future so that our legacy may be valued by those who follow us.

And may this be so for the greater good of all, now and always, amen.

**Sarah Tinker**

*Thanks to Kensington Unitarians, the congregation of Essex Church, and particularly to Rev Sarah Tinker, Howard Hague, Will Lyons and Daniel Hughes for preparing the content and to Jane Blackall for the layout of this worship pack, which was commissioned by the Worship Panel of the General Assembly of Unitarian and Free Christian Churches.*

*Here you will find some material for at least part of a worship service to recognise the 200th anniversary of the death of Theophilus Lindsey. Do feel free to adapt this material to suit your own particular circumstances.*

*The Worship Panel would welcome suggestions for further projects that would support and enhance Unitarian Worship. Look out for current and future worship materials from the Worship Panel, including a forthcoming pack on Charles Darwin, to coincide with the bicentenary of his birth.*

*We would be grateful for feedback on this worship pack - when, where, and in what capacity you made use of these materials. Please send comments to The Worship Panel c/o Essex Hall 1-6 Essex Street, London WC2R 3HY or by email to martin@gienke.net.*

**August 2008**