

LETTERS & PAPERS  
OF  
EZRA STILES

PRESIDENT OF YALE COLLEGE

1778-1795

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BY

MRS. EDWARD S. HARKNESS

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*Edited by Isabel M. Calder*

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The *Abbe Nollet*<sup>3</sup> of Paris, from Affection to his System of Electricity which he had conceived before he saw D<sup>r</sup> Franklins Solutions, adhered tenaciously to it and wrote against the latter. An Italian Philosopher *Father Beccaria* of Turin espoused and adopted D<sup>r</sup> Franklins Solutions and Principles into his System of Electricity published at Turin and maintained an Opposition to the Abbe Nollet in Favor of D<sup>r</sup> Franklin; and wrote the above Compliment in a Postscript to a Letter to W—— his Friend and Correspondent in London.

July 18 1763

### John Rodgers' to Ezra Stiles

New York, May 13<sup>th</sup> 1767.

Rev<sup>d</sup> Sir,

I am much obliged to you for your kind favour of the 11<sup>th</sup> Ult: the Continuance of your Correspondence will be extremely agreeable to me, and tho' I have indeed much on my Hands in that Way, besides a great Variety of important Parochial Duties yet shall allways redeem Time to make the best Returns in my Power to D<sup>r</sup> Stiles. You need not fear that you will burden me, for Labours of Love and especially if Labours of Usefulness I rank among my Pleasures, tho' they do cost me some Fatigue.

I hope your Association will approve of our general Design of a Union of Interests.<sup>2</sup> Pray let it be understood that they are desired to make such alterations in the Plan as they may think conducive to the grand End—for this Purpose we send Copies to all our Brn, that the Plan may be finished at New-Haven—and the Gent<sup>o</sup> with You may rest assured that there is not the most distant Design to raze Foundations or in the least alter the Constitutions of our respective Chhs.

The present Ministry seem friendly to the Interests of religious Liberty. Our Friends at Home inform us that our Synod's Pastoral

<sup>3</sup> Jean Antoine Nollet, 1700-1770, author of *Lettres sur Vélectricité. Dans lesquelles on examine les dernières découvertes qui ont été faites sur cette matière, etc.* (Paris, 1753), and *Seconde partie . . . contre la doctrine de M. Franklin, etc.* (2 pt., Paris, 1760).

<sup>1</sup> John Rodgers, 1727-1811, a Presbyterian minister of New York City.

<sup>2</sup> Commissioners of the Synod of New York and Philadelphia and delegates from the associated pastors of Connecticut met in Elizabethtown in 1766 and in New Haven in 1767 to consider union for the purposes of spreading the gospel and preserving the religious liberties of the church.

Letter, and our address to the King on the Repeal of the Stamp-Act were well rec<sup>d</sup> and have made favourable Impressions on the minds of those in Power. I inclose you a Copy of the Pastoral Letter tho' a little unseasonably.

The following Anecdote you may depend on. A friend of mine now in London waited on my Lord Shelburn<sup>3</sup> in Nov<sup>r</sup> last and among other things took occasion to mention the affair of an American Bishop—His Lordship, apprehending that he was applying in favour of sending one, said with some Degree of Warmth, "Sir, You must be a man of great Ingenuity to convince me that the sending of a Bishop to America wou'd be of any Service"—"My Lord (replied my Friend) I have the Hon<sup>r</sup> to be of your Lordship's Opinion"—"O! (said He) it is well enough then"—on which He went on and said, "As long as I have any Influence in the Parlaiment or Cabinet so long will I most strenuously oppose that absurd Step." You may shew this to any of your Friends; but my Friend desires it may not be put in any of the publick Prints for prudential Reasons too obvious to mention.

I most ardently wish you every Species of Happiness, especially much of the Influences of the Spirit of Grace and Success in the great Work of the Gospel Ministry—and am, with great Esteem, your affectionate Friend and hble Serv<sup>t</sup>

JOHN RODGERS

P. S. I do not well understand what you mean by "the circular Letter," unless it be the Letter we agreed on as a genl Plan of Correspondence with our Friends at Home on the Subject of Bishops, a Copy of which I inclose you for your Use and amusement. I have the Pleasure to inform you that there is a prospect of the Rev<sup>d</sup> D<sup>r</sup> Witherspoon's<sup>4</sup> accepting the Call of the Trustees of the College of New Jersey to the President's Chair, tho' not a Certainty.

D: Stiles.

[Endorsed]

Rec<sup>d</sup> 10 June 1767

Ans<sup>d</sup> Apr. 7. 1768.

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<sup>3</sup> William Petty, Lord Shelburne, Secretary of State for the southern department with charge of the administration of the colonies.

<sup>4</sup> John Witherspoon, 1722-1794, President of the College of New Jersey at Princeton from 1768 to 1794.