

EXTRACTS FROM THE ITINERARIES
AND OTHER MISCELLANIES OF
EZRA STILES, D.D., LL.D.
= 1755-1794

WITH A SELECTION FROM HIS
CORRESPONDENCE

EDITED
UNDER THE AUTHORITY OF THE CORPORATION OF YALE UNIVERSITY
BY
FRANKLIN BOWDITCH DEXTER, LITT.D.



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A SELECTION OF LETTERS .
MAINLY OF THOSE RECEIVED BY
PRESIDENT STILES

1750-92

ARRANGED ALPHABETICALLY BY AUTHORS

FRANCIS ALISON, D.D.

He was born in the north of Ireland in 1705, and after a period of study in the University of Glasgow came to America in 1735. In 1736 he was ordained and installed as pastor of a Presbyterian Church in New London, Chester County, Pa., where he also conducted a flourishing school, which was afterwards removed to Newark, Delaware.

In 1751 he went to Philadelphia, to take charge of the Academy recently established there, and to serve as assistant minister in the 1st Presbyterian Church; and when, in 1755, the College of Philadelphia was added to the Academy foundation, he was made Vice Provost and Professor of Moral Philosophy. The honorary degree of M.A. was given him by Yale in 1755, and that of Doctor of Divinity by the University of Glasgow in 1758.

He died in office in 1779.

Philad^a. 9^{ber}. y^e. 17th. 1757.

Rev^d. & Dr. Sr.

A Society of Gentlemen in this City have undertaken to publish a monthly magazine,¹ (a plan of which I send you enclosed) & they promise themselves the Countenance and encouragment of all Gentlemen of letters on the Continent.

Some of them applied to me to mention such of my acquaintances as I thought qualified & inclined to promote this useful undertaking, and as I could not in Justice to y^r. Character omite y^r. name, they requested me to write to you to procure them Subscriptions

¹ *The American Magazine*; one volume only appeared, in 1757-58.

& to favor them with any papers you think worthy of the publick attention.

Tis to be hoped that this undertaking may encourage some men of abilities to publish their sentiments or Observations, who thro modesty might otherwise deprive y^e world of that benefit—that it may engage our young students to become litterary adventurers, when it can be done with so much safety—that it may promote a friendly intercourse among men of Learning in our different Colonies, & possibly produce some papers worthy y^e. approbation of Great Britain famed for Arts & Sciences.

If I have been led to give you too much trouble I hope you will excuse me. I did not foresee that it would have been necessary for me to have gone so far when I named you, but from the character given of you they ventured to print y^r. name without y^r. previous consent. If you be pleased to approve of what they have done you may expect some of the magazines as a specimen. Make my best respects to y^r. Spouse tho unacquainted, to M^r Cheesbrough & his good Family, & to Mess^{rs}. Collins & Flagg & young M^r. Ward & believe I am with great Sincerity

Your real Friend & obedient humble Serv^t.

FRA: ALISON.

Philad^a. May y^e. 27th. 1759.

R D Sr.

I was favord with yours by M^r. Solomon Southwick,¹ & am highly pleased that you continue so unwearied in the pursuit of knowlege. I pray God that he may long spare you, & make you a blessing to his church, and a useful instrument to promote knowlege & learning. I am sorry that I am able to give you so little satisfaction concerning the Comet; when it first appeard, M^r. Grew² our professor of Mathematicks, could see it but twice, the wether was so hazey. I got up about three, one morning, to observe it with him, but the skie was clouded, & y^e. morning was so raw, that I almost lost my health by it, which brought me to a resolution that effectually destroyd my star-gazing. When it appeard

¹ A non-graduate member of the Class of 1757 in the College of Philadelphia, who became the editor of the *Newport Mercury*. He received the honorary degree of M.A. at Yale in 1780.

² Theophilus Grew, M.A., Professor in the College of Philadelphia.

again, we conjecturd that it was another comet, & were in great doubts, whether either of them was y^e one so eagerly expected last year. M^r. Grew made some observations, but on my application to him to communicate y^m., I find that he either has not obtaind y^e satisfaction he desired, or that he is more reserved than usual. It appears to me to be no easy matter to calculate their periods from y^e. short visits which they pay us, notwithstanding that some has made great pretensions this way. As I hope with more certainty, & less trouble, to acquire this kind of knowlege in the next stage of my existence, if it be necessary, I have determind to give my self no further trouble till I be alowd to converse with Newton, Halley, Whiston, & Flamstead, & some others of y^e. same complexion, if these great names be alowd to shine in one constellation in heaven. Yet I am far from blaming you for y^r. careful & acurate researches; it may make you more useful here, & form y^r. taste to examine y^e. works of God with a higher satisfaction in y^e coming world.

I have seen proposals to unite y^e several Colleges on this continent, as near as might be, in y^e. same plan of Education, to govern them nearly by y^e. same laws, & to admit none in one college y^t. were expelld or denyd admittance in another, without previously consulting y^e. heads of y^e. college from whence y^e. student was expelld, &c. This proposal was made by M^r. President Clap, & deserves a serious consideration. I think that there ought to be more care taken to prepare boys for the College than is now used. Certainly y^e. design of y^e. founders is not complyd with by preparing boys to recite Virgil, Tully & y^e. Greek Testament, as it were by Rote, without sufficiently understanding y^e. Latin & greek Grammars, & being able to write latin & english at least grammatically, if not elegantly. Euclids Elements, & Algebra, at least so much as might enable y^m. to solve quadratick equations, should be taught y^e classes stately & carefully, & Moral Philosophy should be a business of greater care & closer application than is now y^e. common practice; without this branch of knowlege, we shall be ill able to defend our holy christian religion; to understand y^e. rights of mankind; or to explain & enforce y^e duties which we ow to God, our neighbors, & our selves. I would, as a friend to learning, recommend it to you, to engage Gentlemen, & Gospel Ministers of y^e first rank, & of more enlarged views to engage in this reformation; 'tis a shame that almost every where

Learning dwindles in Colleges & Universities; & y^t. y^e. loudest complaints cannot awaken them from their Lethargie. I will count it a favor to receive, & will punctually answer y^r. letters, especially while you are active in promoting y^e kingdom of x^t., or y^e cause of Liberty, virtue, or Learning; & am with great respect

Y^r. assured Friend & humble Servant

FRA: ALISON.

P. S. I am heartily grieved for y^e. contentions & divisions that are like to prevail in Connecticut¹; I highly esteem that church, & people, & had almost determin'd to make it y^e. retreat of my old age; but am vex'd that they bite & devour one another. Nothing can be more fatal to their piety, morals, or liberty; they will be swallow'd up by the Episcopal church, who envy their prosperity, & will avail themselves of these divisions. You have some Interest with y^e. contending parties, & should not be discouraged, but excite y^m. to bear, & forbear one another, & to have peace among themselves; persist in endeavors for peace, prevent them from going to extremes, & God will support you, & bless y^r. endeavors. I have no Interest with any of them, or else I would use it; & would conjure & beseech them to follow y^e things y^t. make for peace.

Philad^a. April y^e. 15th. 1764.

Rev^d. & Dr. S^r.

I had the favor of yours bearing date March 26 with a copy of y^r. new Charter² per M^r. Say^m., for which please to accept my hearty thanks; I am amazed to see how eagerly all religious denominations grasp at power; there was a great clamour raised in York, because the President of that College was to be forever of the Episcopalian church; tho' all other professorships were open to Protestants of all other denominations; & I have complain'd of great Narrowness in y^r. New English Colleges for obliging the children of Episcopals to attend their publick worship, as was the case in New heaven with respect to M^r. Ponderons

¹In connection with what was known as the Wallingford Controversy, over the settlement of a "New-Light" minister.

²Of Rhode Island College, now Brown University, granted in February, 1764.

children.¹ In Holland & Scotland there is no such hardships put upon the students. Such narrowness in Colleges supported at y^e. publick expence of a govern^t. to me appears unreasonable; how far private persons may restrain their benefactions I pretend not to determine, but I could find in the Charter no sum granted either at once or yearly for y^e support of this Colledge, nor is the sum limited which they may receive for its use by donations from private persons or otherways; some Regulations in the charter I like well, particularly the powers granted to the Faculty or fellowship. I do not well understand y^e. clause where it is enacted y^t. no tests shall ever be introduced. I think that you have so many tests as the proportional numbers of the different religious denominations, that must for ever constitute y^t. Trustees & fellowship.

You greatly alarm me by saying that there are attempts making at home to resume the New England Provincial charters², some madness has taken possession of the assembly of this Province, for they are doing all they can to persuade their Constituents to Petition for a Kings Govern^t.; if we do, we will unavoidably have a new charter & a very disagreeable abridgement of our Privileges. The Episcopal Party are very uneasy, that their power here is not equal to what it is in England; & the fears that our Colonies will some time hereafter shake of their dependence on the Mother Countrey, will, I fear, induce the English Parliament to introduce a test; or at least confine all offices in the Army & Revenue to members of the Episcopal church. Our debates run high in this Province at this time, between the Presbyterians & Quakers, who of all others should unite most heartily in defence of liberty. I know not how the Quarrel began, for there have been great complaints that our frontier countries have been neglected under the severities of an Indian War, & that this arose

¹ Rev. Ebenezer Punderson (Yale 1726), who had recently taken charge of the Episcopal mission in New Haven, applied in November, 1753, to President Clap for leave for his sons, members of the Junior Class, and other Episcopal students, to attend worship statedly in his church. The request was refused.

² It was rumored in the colonies at this time that great alterations were to be made in the northern governments: Massachusetts, Rhode Island, and Connecticut were to lose their charters and the territory divided between New Hampshire and New York. In addition to these enlarged governments, two others were to be established—Nova Scotia and Maine.

from a want of an Equal number of Representatives; the three interior counties sending twenty six, who are quakers or under Quaker Influence, & the five frontier counties being mostly of other Denominations, sending but ten, tho the charter has alowd every county to send an equal number. One County mostly Presbyterians sent down a petition signed by above 1200 persons praying for a redress of grievances, & among others for an equal share in Legislation. This produced a most scurrilous piece called a looking glass for Presbyterians,¹ in which it is roundly asserted that they should have no share in government; I herewith send you a copy, as he pays his respects to y^r. New English men.

But I fear the consequences of these squables; the mice & Frogs may fight, till y^e. Kite devours both. I dislike it in y^r. College that the professors are not fellows; it must lessen their reputation that they have no share in y^e. govern^t. . . .

Your friend to serve you
& obedient humble Serv^t.

FRA: ALISON.

Philadelphia June y^e 13th 1765.

Rev^d. & Dr. Sr.

I had the favor of two of y^r. letters relating to M^r. Sandiman^s & his success in y^e. New England Colonies, which gave me & my friends great satisfaction. I confess my fault, & am ashamed that I did not write you answers, as I ought; but I am lazy to write letters; & I never was informd with certainty whether M^r. Sandiman was in this city, but it is confidently asserted that he was; but applying to some obscure covenanters to whom he was recommended, & being discouraged by them, he departed in two or three days after his arrival. I think it strange that his presence should spoil what he effected by his writings. I was grieved for y^e churches in Connecticut & approve of the ministers that prevented the spread of his errors; yet I think they treated M^r. White^s

¹ Possibly by Isaac Hunt (College of Philadelphia 1763), the father of Leigh Hunt.

² Robert Sandeman, founder of the sect of Sandemanians.

³ Rev. Ebenezer White (Yale 1733), pastor of the Congregational Church in Danbury, was arraigned in 1763, under suspicion of Sandemanianism. He was dismissed under censure in 1764.

too severely, by degrading him as they did, & excluding him from ministerial Communion.

I am amazed that the English Parliament has given their own Constitution such a blow, as to tax men without their consent, given by themselves or their Proxies. It is an insult on common sense to say y^t. Persons chosen for Representatives of London & Bristol are in like manner chosen to be y^e. representatives of Boston & Philad^a. Has two men chosen to represent a poor Borrough in England, y^t. has sold its votes to y^e highest bidder, any pretence to say that they represent Virginia or Pennsylvania; & has 400 such paltry fellows a right to take our liberties. Had we King George the third & Queen Charlotte and the Royal family with us; we would possibly go further; & vote that Britain & Ireland should be ceded to France or Spain or Holland for their colonies in America. Power is a sad thing. Yet I think our Mother should remember we are children, & not slaves. M^r. Serjeant¹ the bearer is a Minister of the Church of England from South Carolina who travells to y^e North with some other Gentlemen for his health; what Civility you show him, I shall esteem as done to

Y^r. friend & humble Serv^t.

FRA: ALISON.

Philad^a. October y^e. 30th. 1766.

Rev^d. & Dr. Sr.

I had the favor of yours dated the 8th. of this instant, and am well pleased with y^e Plan you sent me to form an Union of the Congregational consociated & Presbyterian Churches. I am persuaded y^t. any pretence to authority in this assembly would ruin all; to advise together as friends & to act as with one Soul to promote y^e. Kingdom of christ & to preserve truth & liberty; & to address y^e. King & his ministers on proper occasions must contribute greatly to our honour and advantage as a body of christians exposed to common difficulties in this probationary state.

I have sent you enclosed one of our publick papers in which you have a letter written by M^r. Galloway² to London wherein he

¹ Rev. Winwood Serjeant, or Serjeant, a native of England; he was later in charge of the Episcopal Mission in Cambridge, Mass.

² Joseph Galloway, a Pennsylvania lawyer, was speaker of the Pennsylvania Assembly from 1766 to 1773. He was opposed to the Revolution.

expresses a hearty good will to have y^e Stamp act put in execution by Hughs,¹ and a paper of his signed Americanus, in which he used all his art to persuade the people to submit to that enslaving statute. Yet a great number of people here have given him a seat in our assembly & y^e assembly have chosen him the speaker of their house. This to many of us appears as an insult on all that opposed the stamp act, both in England and in these Colonies. Sure none of them would have chosen him for their representative, that so earnestly persuaded them to become slaves. Such conduct deserves the publick resentment of all our neighbours, and it would be very agreeable to many in this place would some of y^r. able pens point out the impropriety in a few lines in y^r. publick paper.

I am miserably confin'd to y^e. College, that I fear I shall not be able to attend y^e Congress² at New York, or rather on Long Island, for there we shall meet, tho my heart is greatly set on y^e union, & I heartily pray that it may be happily accomplish'd. I am ready to resign my place in the College, & retire to the country meerly thro chagrine. The College is artfully got into y^e hands of Episcopal Trustees. Young men educated here get a taste for high life & many of them do not like to bear y^e poverty & dependence of our ministers. Those that pass Tryals for y^e ministry meet with hard Treatment from y^e. Brethren y^t. favor Jersey College, & can hardly find settlements, and under that discouragment they are flattrd & enticed by their Episcopal acquaintances to leave such biggots & to go to London for orders. Now two or three of our ablest young men are ready to sail for London for this purpose; this makes parents uneasy, & it gives me pain, as our enemys gathr strength by our loss, & Jersey College is so unfit to make scholars, that we have no great pleasure to send them there; we would hope they will now put that Seminary on a better foundation; I would be glad of y^r. advice on this head (of my removal) by y^e post & am with great Esteem

Your affectionate friend & humble Servant

FRA: ALISON.

¹ John Hughes, appointed Stamp-Master of Pennsylvania in 1765.

² To effect the Union referred to in the first part of this letter.

Philad^a. Dec. y^o. 4th. 1766.

Rev^d. & Dr. Sr.

I had the favour of y^r. dated Nov. 22^d., and have herewith sent you a Copy of y^o plan formed at Elizabeth Town, by the Delegates from the associated pastors in Connecticut, and the Commissioners from our Synod. The Congress was free, open & friendly; from y^r. observations, & y^o draught you sent me I formed a plan, which was readily received, & passd with but a few amendments; the delegates from Connecticut behaved with great moderation and candor

A strong effort was made by some of the Gentlemen in New York, & a number of Gentlemen of our Denomination in this City, & the Lower Counties annexd to this Government, to unite all y^o P.byterians in the College of New Jersey. They proposed that they should appoint a President, a Professor of Divinity, & two professors of the sciences; & that each of them should teach one or more branches of Learning. The Salarys of each professor to be 200 or 250 Pounds per ann. & y^o. President to have about 50 pounds more than any of them. They proposed M^r. Blair or M^r. Treat for Divinity professor¹; M^r. Ewing² & me, one to be president, & professor of Moral Philosophy, y^o. institutes of y^o. law of nature & metaphysicks, & the other a professor of Mathematicks & Natural Philosophy; or if they rather choose M^r. McDowal³ & M^r. Wilson,⁴ as they have deservedly a high reputation for learning & piety, this would have given our gentlemen satisfaction; & the Rev^d. M^r. Duffield, or M^r. Ross or M^r. Halsey,⁵ Gentlemen highly esteemed by them, were proposed to teach languages, Logick, Geography & Composition; on their accepting these proposals, our Gentlemen proposed to assist them with their purses & influence to establish funds, & to open a Subscription for a number of

¹ John Blair was elected to this chair in 1767, but resigned in 1769; Joseph Treat (Coll. N. J. 1757) was colleague pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in New York.

² John Ewing (Coll. N. J. 1754) was the pastor of the First Presbyterian Church in Philadelphia.

³ Alexander McDowall, Principal of the Presbyterian school in Newark, Delaware.

⁴ Matthew Wilson, a Presbyterian pastor in Delaware.

⁵ George Duffield (Coll. N. J. 1752), pastor in Carlisle, Pa.; Robert Ross (Coll. N. J. 1751), of Bridgeport, Conn.; Jeremiah Halsey (Coll. N. J. 1752), Tutor at Princeton.

years for this purpose. At the Election of a President, five Gentlemen from this City waited on the trustees with these proposals; but they met with a cold reception, & such as they complain of, as very unpolite. For tho they knew well such terms were to be offerd, they hurried, & made choice of a president, before they received their proposals. They have chosen one Wetherspoons, a minister in Paisly in Scotland; he is esteemd as a keen satirical writer, but they know nothing of his academic abilities, nor whether he will accept their offer; he has a family of seven children, they have voted him two hundred sterling per ann. but whether he can teach any thing but Divinity is hard to say. Should he accept their invitation & undertake this Province, this would be a likely way to unite us, but in the mean time the College is sinking in its reputation for want of a head. Three young men bred in our College, are now gone home for orders, they are all men of Learning & abilities, and two of them excellent preachers. This has inflamed our people with indignation against our College (of Philad^a). Our students meet with hard measures from the ministers in y^e. favor of Jersey College, under a pretence of examining their stiles, so that they can hardly find settlements or pass tryals; & on the other hand, the church advocates persuade them to leave such persecuting narrow biggots, & join with them; this disappointment excited our Gentlemen to come to a Resolution to send all their children to Jersey, being persuaded that were all our students bred under the same professors in the same College, all our disputes would have an end. Had this scheme taken place, I had resolv'd to withdraw from this College; for if I should do so, few Presbyterians would come here. But now I really do not know what is my duty. Since the Election I was in company with one of y^e. Trustees, when it was proposed to send M^r. McDowal to the College, as a professor of Moral Philosophy & Metaphysicks, & to desire him to assist M^r. Halsey, the ablest Tutor they now have, in preparing his Lectures in Natural Philosophy & Mathematicks; & that these two, with two tutors now employd, should carry on their business till M^r. Wetherspoon gives his Answer. I would remark, that M^r. McDowal is a widower, & has no family, is a gentleman of universal Learning, has taught some years, is remarkable for a sound judgm^t., a meek peaceable temper, & for undissembled Piety. But I expect no good Success

from any proposals we can make, and thus our enemies gain ground by our foolish animosities. . . .

Your assured friend & obedient humble servant

FRA: ALISON.

Philad^a. December y^e. 12th. 1767.

Rev^d. & Dr. Sr.

. . . . As to my life there is little in it deserves publick notice, yet I am much obliged to you for y^e. esteem & affection y^t. gave rise to y^r. friendly proposal. What gives me most satisfaction on a review of my services done to mankind is 1. That at my arrival here there was not a College, nor even a good grammar School in four Provinces, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Jersey, & New York; but on the other hand all y^t. made any pretensions to learning were branded as letter learned Pharisees; & this desperate cause, of promoting learning in this Province, I undertook, encouraged by our Synod, who allowd me only twenty pounds currency, per ann. & fifteen for an assistant; & obliged us to teach all gratis, that were pleased to accept of learning on these terms; & in this the success was beyond our expectations; & it roused a spirit in Philad^a. to erect an academy, & then a College; & since that time Learning became reputable, even amongst those that gave y^e. nickname of Letter-learned Pharisees, brought up at y^e feet of Gamaliel; 2. That while I firmly maintaintd a due regard to y^e life & power of Religion, I with a few others made a stand against Enthusiasm & wild disorders y^t. were like to destroy religion, & ruin our Churches. Had all men in America given way to y^e. wild opinions & practices that were boldly sanctified with y^e. name of a work of God, I know not what would have become of our churches. When these very men have come to think soberly, they have given up these things; & tho they abuse us, they go no further than we do; & had they acted in these times as they do now, they had been called graceless opposers of the work of God. 3. I saw with sorrow y^t. y^e. Poverty of our Ministers, & y^e. distresses of their widows & children, discouraged men of abilities who could afford to educate & support their Children, from desiring them to serve Christ & mankind in y^e. ministry of the Gospel; I saw that the Church of Scotland had set an example to remedy this evil, that all y^e. Protestant churches should follow; I apply

to Mess^{rs}. Wallace & Webster in Edinburgh who projected the Scotch Plan, & they generously gave me all the assistance in their power to project a plan; I made many attempts to get it fixd on a sure foundation & with great difficulty obtaind a Charter from our Proprieteries for this Purpose. This work cost me unwearied application for some years. I got some to lend me their names, who did it out of complaisance, but cared not for it, as I did. To my mortification when the Charter was obtaind, I found endless objections raised against it, thro meer folley & Ignorance. When y^e Charter was obtaind, it was as hard to raise a fund, but these difficulties thro y^e blessing of God got removed even beyond our most sanguine expectations. Light began to break in on some of our ministers, who put their shoulders with me to the burden; among this number I must mention M^r. Rogers, M^r. Hector Alison, M^r. Beatty, M^r. Laite, M^r. Rob^t. Smith, & many of our Gentlemen. Now we have in our fund ten thousand Pounds, & fifty two or more ministers pay to it a sum annually, that thro y^e divine blessing, I hope it will answer our expectations. 4. And tho I had but a small share in projecting & executing y^e Plan for uniting our Synod with y^r. Churches yet as far as I did contribute, I [] y^e Reflection y^t. it gives me pleasure; how this may hereafter proceed God knows; & to him we submit it. During all y^e. years I have been so employd, I have been reviled & traduced as an enemy to Christ & his [] by all or most of the followers of M^r. Whitefield; tho I always beleived & said I beleived y^t. he was a sincere good man, but weak & often mistaken.

For services in the Churches: in New London I received for y^e. first nine years, fifty four pounds per annum & no more; for y^e next six, sixty four pounds; then I was invited to Philad^a., where for Preaching they paid me fifty pounds per annum. These sums could not bear expences to a man in a publick station; but I thank God, I have ever lived above pinching poverty since I settled in America; & can leave a small matter to my children, which will be enough with honest industry; & without this, no estate is sufficient. You see my pen has run far enough, but I do not think even these particulars y^t. I mention deserve y^e. publick attention; tho I have so freely mentioned y^m., I lament y^t. y^e. Names & Labors of many of our worthy ministers in this wilderness are sunk into oblivion, & if I had been able, I would have

attempted their Characters; but this was not my Province; but I wish you great success in y^r. generous undertaking, & am in haste, but ever yours to serve you.

FRA: ALISON.

Philad^a. May y^o. 7th. 1768.

Rev^d. & Dr. Sr.

About an hour ago, while I was engaged in Company, M^r. Easton informed me that Cap^t. Anthony was to sail to morrow morning, which will be sufficient to excuse me, tho I do not comply with all your Requests, in y^r. last letter. I will send you a Copy of my Diploma from Glasgow; for it was from that University I had my degree, as a Doctor. I shall also send you a Copy of a letter from D^r. Hutcheson Professor of Moral Philosophy in that City, relative to our setting on foot a Seminary in our province, which if I remember was written in 1746. Learning was then at a low Ebb with us, & no prospect of a College in this, or in any of the neighbouring Colonies at this time. Our Synod had open'd a publick School under my care, & to make it as useful as possible, with y^o. advice of the trustees, I open'd a correspondence with him. . . . That School has still been preserved, & is now taught in a little Village called New-Ark, in Newcastle County; where there are above sixty boys under the care of a rector, & two assistants, & it seems to flourish. Here the Languages are carefully taught, with Arithmetick, Euclids Elements, y^o. Practical branches of the Mathematicks, & Logick. From hence y^o. students that intend to study Divinity apply to some College, as their inclination leads y^m., & such as study law, or Physick generally are contented with y^o. Proficiency they make at this School. It is under y^o care of some men of note for learning in this Province as Trustees. Here lodgings are cheap, no man pays above fifteen pounds per Ann. for his Lodging, & some have it for ten, or twelve pounds; & three pounds ten shillings per ann. tuition money. Hence farmers can educate their children, so as to fit y^m. for almost any station in life, y^t. could not hope for such advantages, were they oblig'd to educate y^m. in this City, tho here they can finish their Education. . . . I have been employ'd sixteen years past, y^o. 17th. of last January in y^o. College & Academy in this City . . .

Y^r. sincere friend & obedient humble servant

FRA: ALISON.

Philad^a. October y^e. 20th. 1768.

Rev^d. & Dr. Sr.

. . . . I am obliged to you for sending me the Theses. They are not now before me; & for this reason I cannot be particular. I am not yet convinced that young Gentlemen can be taught with any degree of propriety to impugn Mathematical Demonstrations. I do not like it that they should publickly assert y^e. lawfulness of keeping slaves.¹ I am assured y^e. Common father of all men will severely plead a Controversy against these Colonies for Enslaving Negros, & keeping their children born British subjects, in perpetual slavery—& possibly for this wickedness God threatens us with slavery

Your assured friend & obedient humble servant

FRA: ALISON.

Philad^a. August y^e first 1769.

Rev^d. & Dr. Sr.

. . . . The Present Critical Scituation of our affairs gives me great uneasiness. I fear the British Parliament are determind to twist the yoke around our necks, & I expect no good from y^e. next meeting of that body, unless y^e. colonies unanimously & firmly persist in their resolution to import no goods, till these severe acts be repealed. It happend well for American liberty that y^e first attempt was made against Boston; they have behaved with great temper & wisdom, & strongly entrenched themselves within y^e. laws of an English constitution. I pray God to give them wisdom & Patience to persist. Had the attempt been made against us, I fear that we had not persisted with so much Firmness; tho we have now catchd the infection, and are as firmly determind to support y^e. common cause, as any of the Colonies. Virginia is a Colony of great reputation in England, & I think their Conduct gives vigor to y^e. common Cause; our three Low counties have adopted their resolves; and Mary-land is determind to stand or fall with her neighbours. What can England do. We have more religion & more Political virtue than any as many

¹ This probably refers to one of the *Quaestiones* proposed for disputation by the candidates for the M.A. degree at Yale College in 1768, viz.:—*An mancipia sub servitute perpetua retinere liceat?*

people in the kings dominions, or possibly in the whole world; they may distress us, but can never enslave us; all Europe owes England a spite, & if they send their Armies to distress & destroy us, they will distress & destroy themselves at the same time; & every power y^t. ever they offended will be their enemy. But our safe way & our short way is to take none of their manufactures. These troubles are mixt with mercy, & our fondness of english fashions & of luxury demanded a check, & it is given by Providence in a way that all ranks are loudly called to observe, & comply with.

I know not what to think of our having bishops; will they send us one amidst all these confusions? Will Abthorpe¹ be the man? Will Philad^a., where the church of England is but barely Tolerated, be y^e. place of his residence? Will D^r. Chandler, & our D^r. Smith be overlooked, & be obliged to bow to an English American Pope?

Our Jersey College is now talking as if she was soon to be the bulwark against Episcopacy: I should rejoice to see her Pistols, like honest Teagues, grown up into great Guns. The President² is an active man, & a good Preacher; & has done much to procure funds; but still they want able professors, & y^e. College is in statu quo, save only that he is constituted a Professor of Divinity; this they greatly wanted, & this Department he will as I expect, convince the world was fittest for him. I hear no great things of his superior knowlege in any Branch of Philosophy, but I think he will do better than any that they had of late years, or could have chosen in the bounds of our Synod.

Your friend & humble Servant

FRA: ALISON.

JOHN AVERY

Son of John Avery (Harvard 1731), a merchant of Boston; born in 1739, graduated at Harvard in 1759, long Secretary of State of Massachusetts, died 1806.

This is a copy of a letter addressed to John Collins, of Newport.

¹ East Apthorp, formerly Rector in Cambridge, Mass., who had returned to England in 1765.

² John Witherspoon, D.D., inaugurated in August, 1768.