

# Franklin on Man's Future Powers

As an experimental scientist, 130 years before the first electric generating plant, Benjamin Franklin wrote to Cadwallader Colden, Oct. 31, 1751 (<http://franklinpapers.org>):

“There are no bounds ... to the force man may raise and use in the electrical way; for [charge] may be added to [charge] and all united and discharged together as one. . . . The effects of common lightning may be exceeded in this way. . . .”

And during the Revolution, in a letter to Joseph Priestley, Feb. 8, 1780 (<http://franklinpapers.org>):

“[With the] rapid progress true science now makes ... it is impossible to imagine the height to which may be carried ... the power of man over matter; we may perhaps learn to deprive large masses of their gravity, and give them absolute levity for the sake of easy transport.”