

Sidney, Philadelphia *Independent Gazetteer*, 6 June 1787

It was remarked frequently, during the late war, that many events favorable to America occurred so *opportunely* that even infidels were forced to ascribe them to the agency of a particular providence. When the first American fleet was fitted out under the command of Commodore [Esek] Hopkins, it was expected it would not have been able to sail from the want of sea lanthorns of a particular construction. The next post, after the discovery of these wants, brought news that Captain [John] Manly had sent a prize into one of the New-England ports, with *exactly* the number and kind of lanthorns which were wanted.

In the second or third year of the war, two thousand musquets were wanted for a particular service. The Congress spent several hours in devising ways and means to procure them. While Mr. [James] Wilson, of Pennsylvania, was speaking upon the subject, and proposing a method of obtaining them that was both uncertain and distressing, the door-keeper of Congress called him out, and introduced him to a Captain of a vessel, who had just arrived. After a few minutes conversation with him, Mr. Wilson returned, and terminated the business before Congress, by informing them, that a vessel had just arrived with two thousand musquets on board, on account of the United States.

These anecdotes are mentioned with a view of taking notice of the opportune publication and arrival of Mr. John Adams's book upon government in America, from which it would appear that divine providence is still active in promoting the happiness of our country. In this excellent work, the principles of republican governments are fully unfolded, and the most undeniable proofs adduced, that a people cannot long be free or happy under a government that consists of a single legislature. His arguments in favor of two or three legislative branches and a powerful executive, drawn from history, from reason, and even from the works of nature, are unanswerable, and will probably serve, joined with the melancholy experience we have had of the folly, instability, and tyranny of single legislatures, to banish those dangerous experiments in government out of our country.

It is to be hoped every freeman in the United States will furnish himself with a copy of this invaluable book. It is more essentially the duty of every person concerned in any way in the government of our country to read and study it. Indeed, I should be glad to see every man who is elected to serve in our assemblies, councils, senates, congress or convention, subscribe a declaration (added to those which are required in most of the states) that he not only believes in the old and new testaments, and that he will faithfully discharge the duties of his station, but that he has read "Adams's Defence of the American Constitutions," or as it might more properly be called Adams's Defence of a mixed, or compound Legislature in all republican Governments.

Margaret A. Hogan. Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2009.

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