

## Review Essay:

# Who Was Benjamin Franklin?: Three Clues To An Unanswerable Riddle

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By William G. Carr. *The Oldest Delegate: Franklin in the Constitutional Convention*.

(Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1990. Pp. 186, \$29.50.)

By I. Bernard Cohen: *Benjamin Franklin's Science*.

(Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990. Pp. xii, 273. \$35.00.)

Edited by Esmond Wright. *Benjamin Franklin: His Life as He Wrote It*.

(Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1990. Pp. x, 297. \$25.00.)

As we pass the 200th anniversary of Benjamin Franklin's death, historians have paused to reassess his role in American culture and our assumptions about who Franklin was as a statesman, philosopher, scientist, and essayist. Esmond Wright's one-volume biography, intended to provide an alternative to Carl Van Doren's classic assessment of Franklin's life, appeared in 1986, and the following fall the *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* devoted a whole issue to Franklin.<sup>1</sup> The editorial board of *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin* cohosted with their counterparts at *The Works of Jonathan Edwards* a national conference on Franklin and Jonathan Edwards at Yale University in February 1990. Franklin was the topic of papers ranging from religious belief and Enlightenment thought to concepts of the self and identity.

New news about Franklin is hard to come by. As James H. Hutson has observed, even access to Franklin's papers through the Yale edition has changed very little about our understanding of his character and place in eighteenth-century history.<sup>2</sup> Most recently, three senior scholars have taken disparate approaches to understanding our most enigmatic founding father. Their books differ in focus, method, purpose, and even intended audience, but all work within the image of Franklin as an Enlightenment figure. Like all students of Franklin, these three authors find it as difficult to escape his self-made image as it is to conceive of Franklin as anyone other than the quintessential Enlightenment man.

In *Benjamin Franklin: His Life as He Wrote It*, Esmond Wright presents Franklin's life story by piecing together excerpts of Franklin's writings. Wright begins with a charming character sketch that pays proper homage to the complexity of Franklin and his history. He then follows with a brief chronology which gives

lay readers a useful time line of Franklin's life. Franklin himself takes the story from there through items arranged by Wright in sequential order with sympathetic, yet sensible, headnotes to explain the origin and significance of each document. Over half of the book consists of selections snipped from Franklin's early works and interspersed among longer excerpts from the *Autobiography*. The remainder draws on a scattering of Franklin's papers and creates the effect of ordered vignettes in the life of a great man.

Although anyone familiar with the *Autobiography* might find interruptions created by the insertion of supplemental documents distracting, Wright's purpose is biographical rather than literary. Without the addition of letters to family and friends, for example, the narrative would include virtually nothing about Franklin's personal life. Wright's technique may, however, leave the false impression that Franklin's recreation of himself is simply one among many equally reliable and valuable sources.

There is a notable change of pace after the *Autobiography* runs out, reinforcing the impression that Franklin's narrative of his life exists on a different literary plane than his other writings. Wright's book could have been constructed wholly outside the confines of the *Autobiography*, freeing his story from the traps of Franklin's self-projected images. Most of the other material included will be well-known to even a casual student of Franklin: "Proposals Relating to the Education of Youth in Pensilvania," Silence Dogood's comments on drunkenness, prefaces from Poor Richard, and Franklin's correspondence explaining his work in electricity. All represent celebrated aspects of Franklin's life and do little to challenge the picture Franklin himself hoped to project for posterity.

Franklin's writings continue to delight and amuse readers in the twentieth century, just as they did in his own time. Even though the eighteenth century was an age noted for witty essayists, Franklin stands out. Wright's selections remind us that the same can be said for Franklin's powers of observation and description. In a letter briefly recounting his 1762 return to Philadelphia from England, he recalled an easy crossing with much visiting back and forth between ships. "This was like travelling in a moving village," wrote Franklin, "with all one's neighbours about one" (p. 163). The image was simple, direct, and full of exotic friendliness and charm.

Among the most interesting letters incorporated in the book are those Franklin wrote to various women with whom he had personal relationships. In a letter written from London in 1760, he addressed his wife Deborah as "MY DEAR CHILD" and expressed concern that she might be troubled by "idle reports" about her husband. "I shall," Franklin pledged, "do nothing unworthy the character of an honest man, and one that loves his family" (pp. 155-56). Though Franklin's missive lacks passion, his genuine affection for Deborah comes through.

Even his letters to Catherine Ray speak of Deborah with the intimacy and

regard born of years of marriage. If anything, Franklin's letters testify to his high opinion of women as a group, as much as they provide hints of unrequited love or secret desire. Perhaps it is time for historians to reevaluate Franklin's attitude toward women with an emphasis on friendship, rather than wistfully regretting that "we shall never know the strength of his feelings" for this women or that (p. 212). At least three historians have attempted to change the perception of Franklin as an "old lecher," but the myth is apparently more useful to biographers than the truth. As Claude-Anne Lopez observes, "the truth is far less titillating."<sup>3</sup>

Wright's documents show that the Stamp Act forced Franklin to take stock of his admiration for the British as opposed to his loyalty to America. His affection for England was sincere, but in a crisis Franklin did not hesitate to place himself in the colonial camp. Although he urged British authorities to forge a closer link with the colonies, Franklin also observed that there was a time when the "colonies would have esteemed it a great advantage, as well as honour to be permitted to send members to Parliament," but that time had passed. "The time is now come," Franklin continued, "when they are indifferent about it" (p. 170).

When revolution finally came, Franklin too became "indifferent," and his support for independence no doubt added to the bitter disappointment he felt at having a loyalist for a son. Wright includes excerpts from Franklin's Revolutionary War correspondence, written while he served as one of three American Commissioners and later as Minister from the United States to France. His letters reveal that he was harrassed by favor seekers—Franklin referred to such people as his "perpetual torment"—but that he also enjoyed life at Passy and fulfilled his duties conscientiously (p. 248). Aware of extensive spy networks operating around him, Franklin resolved "to be concerned in no affairs that I should blush to have made public," and simply ignored British and French espionage (p. 253).<sup>4</sup>

For much of his life Franklin also chose to ignore religious issues, but his views surfaced in a portion of the *Autobiography* which mentions his pamphlet entitled *A Dissertation on Liberty and Necessity, Pleasure and Pain*. Written while Franklin was a youth in London, the essay relied on a mechanical view of nature and divinity to deny any distinction between good and evil. Unfortunately, Wright includes no sample of Franklin's only lengthy foray into religious philosophy and instead passes over it as one of Franklin's self-confessed errata. Commenting that Franklin later "totally disowned" the heretical views of *A Dissertation*, Wright allows Franklin to maintain his own carefully constructed public image as a mild-mannered deist (p. 61). Nowhere, however, does Franklin "totally disown" views expressed in the tract, though he did regret "printing this pamphlet," that is, making it public (p. 61).

*A Dissertation*, if taken seriously, complicates Franklin's religious beliefs and adds a dark side missing from most assessments of his personality.<sup>5</sup> Only once does Wright allow Franklin to show his capacity for deep, bone-jarring anger. In



BENJAMIN FRANKLIN.

Né à Boston, dans la nouvelle Angleterre le 17 Janvier 1706

Portrait of Benjamin Franklin painted by Augustus de Saint-Aubin in 1777.

1764, when the Paxton boys murdered a group of native Americans in Lancaster, Franklin penned a vituperative polemic as an account of their exploits. The poor natives, Franklin sputtered, would have been safer “among *Popish Spaniards*” or anywhere else in the world “except in the neighbourhood of the CHRISTIAN WHITE SAVAGES of *Peckstang* and *Donegall* (pp. 165-66)!

Wright’s selection and arrangement of materials add up to a friendly but unreflective, perusal of Franklin’s life. If there are any clues to who Benjamin Franklin was in the corpus of his own writings, they lay obstinately hidden from view. Had Wright drawn on the list of reconsidered and previously unattributed essays contained in J. A. Leo Lemay’s *The Canon of Benjamin Franklin*, a different Franklin would have emerged. There one finds evidence that Franklin displayed a full range of emotions from hard, bitter satirist, to a man who had unresolved doubts about the existence of God and worth of humankind. Using pen names and the cloak of anonymity, he vented feelings inappropriate to his public image as an enlightened figure. In addition, Wright missed the opportunity offered by Lemay’s list to publish works penned by Franklin that have not been included in the Yale edition of his papers or any other compendium of Franklin’s writings.<sup>6</sup>

I. Bernard Cohen focuses on a specific aspect of Franklin’s life by evaluating his career as a scientist. *Benjamin Franklin’s Science* includes eight articles written by Cohen between 1943 and 1954, a brief note from 1987 on utilitarianism and science, three new essays, and a supplement containing a piece by Samuel Y. Edgerton, Jr. about the Franklin stove. In an introductory overview, Cohen returns to his familiar theme emphasizing the lack of appreciation among American historians for Franklin’s contributions to theoretical science.

Although it is now generally recognized that Franklin’s reputation as a scientist aided his public career and accelerated his effectiveness as an American representative in Europe, Cohen points out that few historians understand the significance of Franklin’s work in electricity. His discoveries in pure science, Cohen asserts, made the sentry box and kite experiments possible and led to his inventing the lightning rod. Perhaps most importantly, Franklin proved that electricity was a natural phenomenon rather than the result of “human intervention in the processes of nature” and, as such, merited as serious study as optics, heat, gravitational mechanics, and other natural phenomena (p. 28). Cohen accepts Franklin’s philosophical utilitarianism, but he shows that Franklin’s “interest was primarily in science itself and in scientific research for its own sake” rather than preconceived goals (p. 39).

Other essays include those that investigate details of how Franklin first expressed interest in electricity, what Franklin knew about electrical experiments of others and when he knew it, and when he made observations on the relationship between color and heat. Two articles from 1952 form the heart of the collection. The first piece establishes that Franklin conducted the kite experiment before

he knew of successful European efforts with his sentry box design. The timing of these two events is important in determining the originality of Franklin's kite experiment to prove that lightning was electrical (p. 77).

Cohen lays to rest doubts about the importance of Franklin's role in conducting the kite experiment and his independent discovery of the nature of lightning. Even clearer here, and in other essays, is the complexity of scientific interchange between colonials and Europeans. The ease with which ideas flowed back and forth across the Atlantic sometimes meant nearly simultaneous scientific discoveries on both sides of the ocean and contributed to the ensuing confusion over who knew what, when, and where.

Cohen's second important essay explores how prejudice against change hindered scientific advances such as Franklin's lightning rods. In the eighteenth century, people still commonly believed that ringing church bells warded off violent storms. Ironically, bell ringers themselves were often victims of electrocution because churches, the tallest structures in most villages, were vulnerable to lightning. Given the expense of building and rebuilding churches, religious officials quickly saw the utility of lightning rods.

Despite official willingness to accept Franklin's invention, churches in Europe continued to stand unprotected well into the nineteenth century. It was not the church hierarchy that refused to use new technology, but lay people who tore down lightning rods for fear of offending God or those who blamed the new devices for drought. The old taboo against tampering with nature thwarted popular acceptance of simple preventive measures. Franklin, by contrast, according to Cohen, was free of such superstitions, "emancipated" as an enlightened man (p. 158).

Although his primary mission is to recover Franklin's place as a pure scientist, Wright includes two essays that focus on Franklin's endeavors to promote science. The first illustrates how Franklin combined an interest in science with philanthropic urges when, in 1754, he published a tract entitled *Some Account of the Pennsylvania Hospital*. Calculated to raise money for the new institution, the pamphlet is a model of modern fund raising, publicity, and philanthropy. The second article explores Franklin's efforts to encourage observation of Mercury's transit over the sun in 1753. Franklin saw the occasion as an opportunity to foster American participation in the international scientific community.

Hospitals and astronomical observations were only two elements of Franklin's program to promote and utilize scientific advances. Among his many other efforts, perhaps the most well-known remains the Franklin stove. Having spoken to an admirer of Franklin who expressed concern that nothing was included in his volume on this popular invention, Cohen decided to append Edgerton's brief history of the Pennsylvania fireplace. The story of Franklin's heating device adds little to the good doctor's reputation as a scientist, but it does illustrate how history made a silk purse out of his sow's ear.

The stove, Edgerton contends, was a flop. The only surviving example has been mutilated by removing Franklin's basic, but unsuccessful, improvements. Though they were produced in the 1740s and 1750s, by 1765 even Franklin had difficulty finding unaltered units. The invention, explains Edgerton, "had at least one fatal deficiency" (p. 209). Unless the fire kept connecting masonry behind the stove box hotter than the outside air, smoke drifted out into the room. Franklin "was clearly hurt by the poor reception" of his innovation (p. 209).

As a scientist, he accepted the challenge to further improve his stove, and Franklin continued to design heating apparatus. He also complained, however, that his first design was abused and altered until it no longer resembled his prototype. Other scientists, including David Rittenhouse and Charles Willson Peale, improved on Franklin's effort, but Franklin himself never invented a successful stove. His apparent refusal to admit the seriousness of flaws in the original version implies an emotional and somewhat irrational attachment to an idea that did not work. Edgerton's research inadvertently opens a crack in the Enlightenment armor which Franklin clamped on to protect himself, and which historians have had difficulty piercing ever since.

Few would challenge Cohen's basic contention that Franklin ought to be taken seriously as a pure scientist. His complaints that general accounts spend too little time on Franklin as a scientist, however, tend to underestimate the task facing biographers. Any one-volume survey of Franklin's life must necessarily be brief about many things. Religion, for example, played a dominant role in eighteenth-century American culture, and Franklin's religious orientation itself has been the subject of much scholarly conjecture, yet two recent biographies give the topic scant attention.<sup>7</sup>

Cohen's objections also minimize the extent of his own impact on Franklin studies. Biographers no longer ignore Franklin's role as a research scientist. As Cohen points out, Ronald W. Clark, for example, asserts that although the lightning experiments were dramatic, Franklin's one-fluid theory of electricity was more important. Similarly, Catherine Drinker Bowen devotes a lengthy chapter of her study of Franklin to his electrical experiments and gives attention to his theoretical work. Even Esmond Wright's 1986 biography, which Cohen cites as evidence of inconsistency in recent historical evaluations, credits Franklin as a "serious scientist" whose theories transformed the study of electricity "from a parlor game to science."<sup>8</sup> The importance of Cohen's research is simple: it broadens evaluations of Franklin in a way that general biographies cannot.

A senior Franklin scholar, William Carr, in *The Oldest Delegate: Franklin in the Constitutional Convention*, sweeps aside popular assumptions about Franklin and his impact on the 1787 meeting to reframe the national government. Carr concludes that Franklin played a more important role in hammering out the Constitution than previously believed. By comparing James Madison's journal of the con-

vention, notes and reminiscences kept by other delegates, Franklin's own speeches and activities, and tallying Franklin's views on proposals that did or did not make it into the final draft of the Constitution, Carr finds ample evidence of Franklin's handiwork. The oldest delegate influenced the thinking of other participants, played the role of compromiser in several crucial instances, and was not particularly limited in his efforts by poor health. Franklin was, in short, his usual self.

"Productive agreement following prudent compromise," notes Carr, "was one of Franklin's 'cardinal ideas' " (p. 20). It was this pragmatic philosophy that Franklin contributed as much as any specific plan of government.<sup>9</sup> Carr also observes that Franklin was often on the winning side in conflicts over specific recommendations, and sixteen of his own twenty-seven recorded motions were passed by the convention. In addition, Franklin was a skilled judge of the temper of the convention. Often criticized for introducing proposals that were deemed untenable, such as a unicameral legislature and an unpaid executive, Franklin understood that his ideas would probably be rejected and expected his losses when they came.

Franklin's health has often been cited as an impediment to his participation in the convention, but he continued to serve as the president of the Pennsylvania Supreme Executive Council and was elected by convention delegates to the busy Committee on Compromise. He attended sessions regularly, and, after the convention, Franklin wrote to his sister that his health was still holding up. Carr attributes persistent myths of Franklin's infirmities to great age, especially when compared to other delegates, well-known bouts with gout and kidney stones, and Franklin's supposed use of a sedan chair. His medical ailments were "transient discomforts" that had little effect on Franklin's mental adroitness (p. 126). In Appendix C, Carr notes that he found no evidence to indicate that Franklin employed the sedan chair during the convention. He concludes that its use as evidence of Franklin's poor health ought to be viewed with "great caution" (p. 171).

If Carr displays a weakness, it is in his clipped analysis which frequently simplifies Franklin's motives, or those of others, and leaves an overall impression of cool detachment on Franklin's part. In a chapter entitled "The People Will Never . . .," Carr illustrates the use of perceived public opinion to oppose proposals under consideration by the convention. Often delegates were mistaken about what the public would tolerate, and Carr points out that Americans have accepted a single executive, federal judiciary, and six-year Senate terms for two hundred years without " 'violent opposition' " (p. 47). His almost mocking tone ignores the already well-established American tradition of arguing in the name of the people and implies a consensus view of history. The persistence of Antifederalist sympathies into the nineteenth century suggests that "the people" were not as complacently tolerant as Carr indicates. Michael Kammen indicates that after ratification the public did not accept the Constitution as readily as historians once believed. He finds evidence in continuing "complaints about disloyalty . . . and



expressions of hostility verging upon denunciation.”<sup>10</sup>

Franklin, Carr contends, refused to evoke public temper in support or opposition to particular measures, though he regarded the people as the ultimate source of power. Instead, Franklin urged his fellow delegates to use their own ideas and judgments to construct a workable government. Franklin had learned from experience that public opinion was difficult to meter and not necessarily attuned to the common interest. In this instance, he played the role of elder statesman to perfection, counseling members of the convention, according to Carr, “to propose what they believed practical, right, and necessary” (p. 50).

Franklin’s aloof idealism also calls to mind that his experience included many years in the rough realm of Pennsylvania’s factionalized political universe, where public opinion sometimes ran counter to his own. During the fight over proprietary rule in Pennsylvania, Franklin attempted to persuade the people to accept a royal government in a pamphlet entitled *Cool Thoughts on the Present Situation of Our Public Affairs*. As a reward for his efforts, Franklin became the object of public opposition and was summarily turned out of office. His “respect” for public opinion grew at least as much out of this experience as it did out of Franklin’s earlier failure with the Albany Plan (p. 49).<sup>11</sup> What Franklin hoped to avoid at the Constitutional Convention was the mistake of arousing public opinion which could then move in unpredictable directions.

Carr also credits Franklin with a “delayed victory” in his handling of Edmund Randolph, governor of and delegate from Virginia (p. 136). Although Randolph had introduced the Virginia Plan, he disliked the final document and refused to sign it. After Randolph apologized to the convention for his opposition and assured his audience that he would not speak out against the Constitution in public, Franklin thanked the governor for offering the original scheme on which the current document was based and for his additional contributions throughout the long meeting.

By the time Virginia considered the Constitution, Randolph had changed his mind and lent critical support needed for passage—hence Franklin’s “delayed victory.” Carr provides no evidence, however, of a cause and effect relation between Franklin’s attempted mollification and Randolph’s change of heart. Randolph left Philadelphia believing that the Constitution could be improved in a proposed second convention which could have considered amendments offered by the state.<sup>12</sup>

When the new plan of government came before Virginia’s ratification convention, however, Randolph chose to follow Massachusetts’ lead and settle for subsequent rather than prior amendments. By then, eight states had already voted in favor of the Constitution and Randolph, who like other Virginians believed that his state held the crucial vote, was convinced that the nation’s survival depended on devising a new frame of government. Randolph had had ambivalent feelings

toward the Constitution all along, and Massachusetts's example allowed him to argue in favor of ratification without compromising his basic principles. In addition, the process of ratification was complex in Virginia, and Randolph was only one among many influential delegates and factors at work there.<sup>13</sup>

Franklin's call for prayer, made June 28, 1787, remains his most popularly known contribution to the convention. Carr supplies the details of Franklin's proposal, noting that Roger Sherman of Connecticut seconded the motion, but that Madison recorded no vote on this or an alternative suggestion to begin prayers after July 4. At least two conflicting accounts of Franklin's actions survive, one by Madison and the other, related through a second-hand source, by New Jersey delegate Jonathan Dayton. Carr gives more credence to Madison's version, which states that Franklin's proposal received serious attention and was directed to a committee for consideration.

Carr concedes that he does not know whether Franklin had any personal conviction about the power of prayer. Possibly Franklin hoped to create a temporary diversion during tense debates over representation. Franklin believed in the "social utility of religion" and sought to remind his fellow Constitution writers of their Christian duties and moral obligations (p. 100). In truth, this exercise required no personal belief on Franklin's part at all. Considering his frequent jabs at those who believed that prayer could have immediate and direct results, it seems more likely that Franklin wanted to arouse religious feelings in others, knowing that that in itself might have a beneficial effect. As a result, his strategy did not require a vote on the actual proposal.

Given Franklin's propensity to obscure not only his religious convictions but almost all of his interior life, who, then, was Benjamin Franklin? One can hardly open a book on eighteenth-century American history without finding him lurking somewhere on its pages. Ironically, in view of Cohen's efforts, Franklin is probably best known in the public mind as a scientist and inventor. Ask a schoolchild who knows anything at all about who Franklin was, and he or she will no doubt mention the kite experiment.

Most scholars are familiar with Franklin the inventor, wit, politician, statesman, editor, and author, but who was Franklin the man? To answer that question, one must be willing to read between the lines that Franklin wrote, for on the surface he gives few indications of his interior life. For all that has been written about him, Franklin's *Autobiography*, with all its ambiguity, remains the best introduction to his character.

Wright provides general readers with a sampling from Franklin's *Autobiography* and other well-known works, while the collection of Cohen's essays brings together a significant body of scholarship for anyone interested in Franklin's place in the history of science. Because of Carr's reevaluation, historians can no longer dismiss Franklin as an old man who was too ill to effectively contribute to the Con-

stitutional Convention. These three books probe and illuminate Franklin's image as a modern enlightened American.

But Franklin occasionally hints at romantic elements in his character with complex dark murmurings of his own discontent and doubt. Though his optimism is more well-known, a pessimistic Franklin, a Franklin who had little or no faith in human nature, also finds expression in his religious views, economic theories, and political convictions. If the roots of romanticism lay in the Enlightenment, then the American epitome of the Age of Reason offers historians some revealing clues to the relationship between the two. Franklin knew the limits of reason, though he distanced himself from the implications of that knowledge, he did not deny its reality. This side too must be taken into account. Only then will the real Benjamin Franklin emerge.<sup>14</sup>

## Notes

1. Esmond Wright, *Franklin of Philadelphia* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 1986); Carl Van Doren, *Benjamin Franklin* (New York: Viking Press, 1938); *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, 111 (October 1987).

2. James H. Hutson, "Franklin at Twenty-five: A Review of Volumes 1-25 of *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin*," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, 111 (October 1987), p. 559.

3. Lopez, *Mon Cher Papa: Franklin and the Ladies of Paris* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1966), p. vii. See additional comments by Lopez in her volume coauthored with Eugenia W. Herbert, *The Private Franklin: The Man and His Family* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1975), p. xi. Seymour S. Blöck makes similar observations in *Benjamin Franklin: His Wit, Wisdom, and Women* (New York: Hastings House, 1975), pp. 22-24.

4. In his account of Franklin's mission abroad, Cecil B. Currey went so far as to accuse Franklin of treason or at least acquiescing to a spy cell operating at the American mission. *Code Number 72 Benjamin Franklin: Patriot or Spy?* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1972), pp. 12, 103. Currey's claims, however, have had little influence on subsequent historiography, and scholars give no credence to the assertion that Franklin was a spy. Jonathan R. Dull refers to such suspicions as "little more than rumor-mongering." "Franklin the Diplomat: the French Mission," *Transactions of the*

*American Philosophical Society*, 72 (1982), p. 41. See also David Schoenbrun, *Triumph in Paris: The Exploits of Benjamin Franklin* (New York: Harper & Row), 1976), pp. 91-93; Ronald W. Clark, *Benjamin Franklin: A Biography* (New York: Random House, 1983), pp. 317-20; Wright, *Franklin of Philadelphia*, pp. 238, 289-96.

5. See my own assessment of *A Dissertation* in "From a Bold Youth to a Philosophical Sage: A Reevaluation of Benjamin Franklin's Religion," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography*, 111 (October 1987), pp. 505-09. On Franklin's dark side see, Ronald A. Bosco, " 'He that best understands the World, least likes it': The Dark Side of Benjamin Franklin," *ibid.*, pp. 525-54.

6. J.A. Leo Lemay, *The Canon of Benjamin Franklin, 1722-1776: New Attributions and Reconsiderations* (Newark: University of Delaware Press, 1986).

7. Ronald W. Clark only briefly mentions Franklin's religious beliefs. *Benjamin Franklin*, pp. 28, 36-37. Esmond Wright's biography uses a few pages to repeat theories of Franklin as a deist. *Franklin of Philadelphia*, pp. 44-50. Alfred O. Aldridge, by contrast, found a whole book full of things to say about Franklin's religious orientation. *Benjamin Franklin and Nature's God* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1967).

8. Wright, *Franklin of Philadelphia*, p. 62. See also Clark, *Benjamin Franklin*, p. 90; and Bowen, *The Most Dangerous Man in America: Scenes from the*

*Life of Benjamin Franklin* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1974), pp. 63-91.

9. Scholarly assessments of the convention often cite the value of Franklin's emphasis on the need for compromise. See, for example, William E. Nelson, "Reason and Compromise in the Establishment of the Federal Constitution, 1787-1801," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd. ser., 44 (July 1987), p. 463.

10. Michael Kammen, *A Machine That Would Go of Itself: The Constitution in American Culture* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1987), p. 46. See also Richard E. Ellis, "The Persistence of Antifederalism after 1789," in *Beyond Confederation: Origins of the Constitution and American National Identity*, ed. Richard Beeman, Stephen Botein, and Edward C. Carter (Chapel Hill, NC: Institute of Early American Culture, 1987), pp. 296-97.

11. [Franklin,] *Cool Thoughts on the Present Situation of Our Public Affairs* (1764) in Leonard Labaree, et al., eds. *The Papers of Benjamin Franklin* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1959-11), 11: 157-73; Sally Schwartz, "A Mixed Multitude": *The Struggle for Toleration in Colonial Pennsylvania* (New York: New York University Press, 1987), p. 233.

12. For a list of Randolph's many objections to the Constitution see, Charles Warren, *The Making of the Constitution* (New York: Barnes & Noble, 1928), p. 704 and John J. Reardon, *Edmund Randolph: A Biography* (New York: Macmillan, 1974), pp. 101-103, 106-114.

13. Forrest McDonald gives a detailed account of Virginia's ratification in *We the People: the Economic Origins of the Constitution* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), pp. 255-83. See also Linda Grant DePauw, "The Anticlimax of Antifederalism: The Abortive Second Convention Movement, 1788-1789," *Prologue*, 2 (Fall 1970), p. 99; Reardon Edmund Randolph, pp. 130-50; John P. Kaminski, "Antifederalism and the Perils of Homogenized History: A Review Essay," *Rhode Island History*, 42 (February 1983), pp. 22-32; William E. Nelson, "Reason and Compromise in the Establishment of the Federal Constitution, 1787-1801," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 44 (July 1987), pp. 476-77; Jon Kukla, "A Spectrum of Sentiments: Virginia's Federalists, Antifederalists, and 'Federalists who are for Amendments,' 1787-1788," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, 96 (July 1988), pp. 277-78, 283; F. Clairborne Johnston, Jr., ed. "Federalist, Doubtful, and Antifederalist: A Note on the Virginia Convention of 1788," *ibid.*, p. 334; Alan V. Briceland, "Virginia: The Cement of the Union," in *The Constitution and the States: The Role of the Original Thirteen in the Framing and Adoption of the Federal Constitution*, ed. Patrick T. Conley and John P. Kaminski (Madison, WI: Madison House, 1988), pp. 208-21.

14. Bosco emphasizes the need to recognize pessimistic elements in Franklin's character in "He that best understands the World, least likes it." pp. 526-528.