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Autore	Findley William <1741 or 1742-1821.>
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Sommario/riassunto	William Findley was an important, if lesser-known, politician during the early national period of American history. He was a captain in the Revolutionary army, an Anti-Federalist, and a forty-year veteran politician of both state and national office. In the Pennsylvania ratifying convention he had vigorously opposed the approval of the proposed Constitution because he felt that it did not guarantee the protection of some basic liberties such as jury trial; religious freedom; and freedom of speech, assembly, press, etc. After the Bill of Rights was adopted, Findley became a strong supporter of the Constitution. "Observations on "The Two Sons of Oil" was written in 1811 in response to the Reverend Samuel B. Wylie's work, "The Two Sons of Oil, " which was published in 1803. In this work of radical Presbyterian theology, Wylie

pointed out what he considered to be deficiencies in the constitutions of both Pennsylvania and the United States and declared them to be immoral. Findley's response to Wylie's criticisms in "Observations" showed that it was neither the purpose nor the design of the United States government to have a federal religion and a federal creed. In a broader sense the book is also a passionate defense of a civil government guided by moral principles that allow for essential freedoms. Findley's defense of religious liberty and the American constitutions affords a grand window through which to view early American understanding about the relationship between politics and faith and why it is essential for both liberty and piety to resist any attempt to unite government and Church. This new Liberty Fund edition will make this work available once again; "Observations on "The Two Sons of Oil"" has not been republished since its original publication in 1812. Scholars of American history, government, and religion will appreciate the new availability of this book, which provides critical insight into Americans' conception of liberty in the nation's formative years. In addition, readers concerned with renewed debates around the world on the separation of church and state will appreciate the timelessness of Findley's arguments for secular government and its compatibility with religious beliefs. William Findley was born in Ireland and emigrated to Pennsylvania in 1763. He served in the Second through the Fifth Congresses, and again in the Eighth through the Fourteenth Congresses, earning the designation "Father of the House" before he retired from Congress in 1817. He died in 1821. John Caldwell is retired from Augustana College, where he was Director of the Library and Professor of History. Himself a native of western Pennsylvania, Professor Caldwell is the author of "George R. Stewart" (1981) and "William Findley from West of the Mountains: A Politician in Pennsylvania, 1783-1791" (2000).

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