

Honoured Sir

March 23, 1801

1 Having once had the pleasure (in company with Mr. Fleming) of hearing you speak favourably of Chipman's Principles of Government - and at the same time signify your desire to be in possession of it - I beg Sir you'll accept of the inclosed Copy being one of six presented me by a Friend in Boston - From your remarks on the work I felt a more than common desire to give it an attentive perusal and must confess I became involuntarily struck with a peculiar boldness of Investigation - an ardent attempt to examine first principles with Candour & Impartiality which accompany and I think is inseparable from true Genius - and which undoubtedly does honor to the Writer - For but a small knowledge of the progress of Science will serve to convince a candid mind - that nothing tends more to retard the progress of Truth than that disposition so prevalent in the mass of Mankind to receive principles at second hand - especially if sanctioned by a name of possessing Celebrity or glossed over with a more than common degree of plausibility - The most absurd prejudices increase and become venerable by age - Antiquity seems as it were to consecrate Error - and men choose rather to follow the beaten paths than reason & Humanity on a deliberate examination would explode than wade through a deliberate research or what some has called the drudgery of Investigation - For my part Sir I cannot <sup>help</sup> feeling a degree of esteem for a man who even dares attempt to shake popular opinions - Should this small Treatise have the effect of tempting men to think more for themselves it would be desirable - For Truth only demands a candid search & seldom fails to reward our labours.

Magoffin James. Phila. Mar. 23. 1801.

rec<sup>d</sup> Mar. 31.

There with a variety of other reasons have induced a few of us to get the work reprinted and give it Circulation through this State — as it appears unknown — — — — — Whatever may in the least tend to disseminate the remaining Felms of prejudice & Error — give energy to and accelerate the reign of those Sentiments & Principles which have for their Basis, Justice, Humanity, & universal Benevolence, with a true knowledge of the most Sacred rights of Man — — — — — whatever may have the happy, the desirable tendency of spreading ~~them~~ and causing those Sentiments to become as universal in the Scale of Human Beings must inevitably draw forth the energy and exertion of every virtuous mind — Excuse Sir the liberty of those few thoughts, probably strained by the premature effusions of inexperienced youth — — — — — It no doubt will be agreeable to hear that the prosperity of this City appears to revive — I just mention the Circumstance of every Shipyard in this City being engaged for one or two Ships this approaching Spring — which principally takes its rise from the prevailing hopes of a speedy & permanent understanding being established between this Country & France — Permit me Sir to add mine to the ardent wishes of your Country for your personal Health & Happiness & believe me to be with every Sentiment of Esteem —

Your mo<sup>st</sup> obed<sup>t</sup> Serv<sup>t</sup>.

James Magoffin

Phila. March 23<sup>d</sup> 1801 —