

THE WORKS

OF

J O H N A D A M S .



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THE
WORKS
OF
JOHN ADAMS,

SECOND PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES:

WITH
A LIFE OF THE AUTHOR,

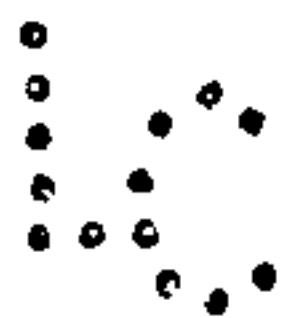
NOTES AND ILLUSTRATIONS,

BY

HIS GRANDSON

CHARLES FRANCIS ADAMS.

VOL. X.



BOSTON:
LITTLE, BROWN AND COMPANY.

1856.

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Cato's age so near my own; he was in his eighty-fourth, and I in my eighty-fifth year.

I never delighted much in contemplating commas and colons, or in spelling or measuring syllables; but now, while reading Cato, if I attempt to look at these little objects, I find my imagination, in spite of all my exertions, roaming in the milky way, among the nebulae, those mighty orbs, and stupendous orbits of suns, planets, satellites, and comets, which compose this incomprehensible universe; and, if I do not sink into nothing in my own estimation, I feel an irresistible impulse to fall on my knees, in adoration of the power that moves, the wisdom that directs, and the benevolence that sanctifies this wonderful whole.

As to writing a review of your volume, it is out of the question. My eyes are not able to read, nor my hand to write it; but as I have four grandchildren gone to school this morning where there are between one and two hundred scholars, I have given it to them to carry to their master, who is very capable of appreciating its value.

TO SAMUEL MILLER.

Quincy, 8 July, 1820.

You know not the gratification you have given me by your kind, frank, and candid letter. I must be a very unnatural son to entertain any prejudices against the Calvinists, or Calvinism, according to your confession of faith; for my father and mother, my uncles and aunts, and all my predecessors, from our common ancestor, who landed in this country two hundred years ago, wanting five months, were of that persuasion. Indeed, I have never known any better people than the Calvinists. Nevertheless, I must acknowledge that I cannot class myself under that denomination. My opinions, indeed, on religious subjects ought not to be of any consequence to any but myself. To develop them, and the reasons for them, would require a folio larger than Willard's Body of Divinity, and, after all, I might scatter darkness rather than light. Before I was twelve years of age, I necessarily became a reader of polemical writings of

religion, as well as politics, and for more than seventy years I have indulged myself in that kind of reading, as far as the wandering, anxious, and perplexed kind of life, which Providence has compelled me to pursue, would admit. I have endeavored to obtain as much information as I could of all the religions which have ever existed in the world. Mankind are by nature religious creatures. I have found no nation without a religion, nor any people without the belief of a supreme Being. I have been overwhelmed with sorrow to see the natural love and fear of that Being wrought upon by politicians to produce the most horrid cruelties, superstitions, and hypocrisy, from the sacrifices to Moloch down to those of Juggernaut, and the sacrifices of the kings of Whidah and Ashantee. The great result of all my researches has been a most diffusive and comprehensive charity. I believe with Justin Martyr, that all good men are Christians, and I believe there have been, and are, good men in all nations, sincere and conscientious. That you and I shall meet in a better world, I have no more doubt than I have that we now exist on the same globe. If my natural reason did not convince me of this, Cicero's dream of Scipio, and his essays on friendship and old age, would have been sufficient for the purpose. But Jesus has taught us, that a future state is a social state, when he promised to prepare places in his father's house of many mansions for his disciples.

By the way, I wonder not at the petition of the pagans to the emperor, that he would call in and destroy all the writings of Cicero, because they tended to prepare the mind of the people, as well as of the philosophers, to receive the Christian religion.

My kind compliments to Mrs. Miller, and thanks for the obliging visit she made me. I interest myself much in her family. Her father was one of my most intimate friends in an earlier part of his life, though we differed in opinion on the French Revolution, in the latter part of his days. I find that differences of opinion in politics, and even in religion, make but little alteration in my feelings and friendships when once contracted.

I have not received Mr. Sergeant's speech, nor the sketch.

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