



The Writings of Thomas Jefferson (Thomas Jefferson - The Writings)

Thomas Jefferson

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The Writings of Thomas Jefferson. Complete Edition. Includes: Jefferson as a Tactician. Jefferson did not rank in oratory with the Adamses, the Randolphs, James Otis and Patrick Henry, who were contemporaneous with him. He was, therefore, not by nature great in the sphere of oratory, and in his public utterances he does not always show the habit of radical thought which gave the great Democratic party, which lived and ruled our country throughout the larger part of the nineteenth century, that tremendous moral force peculiar to that marvelous organization which he founded and fostered throughout his long, useful and eventful life. Yet his speeches, if they may be classed as such, were clear, logical, forceful, convincing. In politics, in literature, in everything that concerned the world's forward movement in his day, his intellectual sympathies were universal, or as nearly so as it was possible for any man's to be. Men less learned and with lesser power of reason and thoughtfulness than he, have moved audiences to frenzy and have carried them at will; but Jefferson, without this peculiar gift, certainly possessed a sufficiency of this power, which the broad culture of the scholar and the steadfast tension of the thinker can give to any man. His addresses and writings are pregnant with profound aphorisms, and through his great genius transient questions were often transformed into eternal truths. His arguments were condensed with such admirable force of clearness that his utterances always found lodgment in the minds of both auditors and readers. Sensitive in his physical organization, easily moved to tenderness, and incapable of malice, he had that ready responsiveness to his own emotions as well as to those of others, which always characterizes genius. While it may be said that oratory was not an art with Jefferson, yet his ideas on all governmental questions were always so clear and strong and well matured that he never failed to express them forcefully and effectively. His wonderful intellect, upon all important occasions, never failed to take hold on principle, justice, liberty and moral development, without which, as a part of its essence, the greatest mind can never express itself adequately. His State papers and his addresses and writings reveal the highest order of intellect, and are marked with a degree of originality peculiarly Jeffersonian. The doctrines he proclaimed and the principles he promulgated were so logical and sound that they are cherished yet, and it is believed by millions of our countrymen that they are as imperishable as the stars. Jefferson's philosophical ideas of democratic government are as much alive to-day as they were when he was at the zenith of his glory in life, and this cannot be said of any other illustrious American who was contemporaneous with him. It may be truthfully claimed that the lamp of liberty, which he, perhaps more than any other one American of his times helped to light, will never go out; and it may also be stated, with an equal degree of truthfulness, that the brilliant star of his own personal and political greatness will never set.

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