Reverend Nehemiah Adams was born on February 19, 1806 in Salem, Massachusetts. He graduated from Harvard University in 1826 and proceeded to Andover Theological Seminary, where he graduated and became ordained as co-pastor of the First Congregational Church in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1829. From 1834 to 1878, he served as pastor of the Union Congregational Church in Boston, Massachusetts.

Adams was a member of the American Tract Society and the American Board for Foreign Missions. His trip to the southern states of the U.S. in 1854 inspired A South-Side View of Slavery, which outraged abolitionists and gave him cause to write The Sable Cloud. Nehemiah Adams died on October 6, 1878.