

## OBITUARY.

Sebastian C. Adams, who died at his home in Salem, Oregon, a short time ago, was well known as an Oregon pioneer, and as a writer and historian. His writings on Freethought topics have graced the columns of the TORCH OF REASON, Freethought Magazine and many other periodicals. His picture and an article on "Religion and Righteousness", appeared in the June number of the Freethought Magazine.

Rev. W. E. Copeland, of the Unitarian church of Salem, says of him:

Whatever he undertook, he did with his whole might, whether it was carpentering, teaching, preaching, or making maps. He was one who did the work of several men. In early life was obliged to support his mother and her family, and he worked at the carpenter's trade, finding time meanwhile to secure an education. He served his constituents as County Clerk and State Legislator, and preached good, strong sermons at the same time. Most men would have been worn out long ago; but work seemed to agree with him. In his last years he had been at work in the way of theological discussion, and articles from his pen frequently appeared in the Oregonian, bringing him into connection with advanced thinkers even as far as India, several letters coming to him from Hindoo interested in a Parliament of Religions to be held in Hindustan. Next to his untiring energy, Mr. Adams was noted for his anxiety to learn the truth—to explore. This led him in 1850 to come overland to California, where, after almost incredible hardship, he arrived, reduced to a skeleton and not conscious of his own identity. When recovered from the effect of his terrible trip across the plains, he came to Oregon, landing among the stumps in what is now Portland. He settled in Yamhill county among the Indians, with whom he was a good friend.

Having explored the new country he began to explore regions of thought with which he was unfamiliar. For many years he was clergyman of the Christian denomination preaching and baptising and working with intense diligence in various parts of Oregon, starting many churches, putting the Christian church in Salem out of debt and in good, healthy condition. He was always reading and studying, and at last thought his way out of the old theology the worst parts of which he had never believed or taught. When Unity church was formed in Salem, he became a member. Since I have been here he has always been in

his place in the church, has sometimes occupied the pulpit, and has published many theological articles in the Oregonian, trying to enlighten those who he considered were in the darkness. He was always ready to discuss religious questions with anyone who would argue. All the new books he read; with all the new thought, he was familiar. Just before he was compelled by illness to leave his beloved books, he was reading Hudson's Law of Psychic Phenomena, and almost his last words to me were about the monstrous doctrines of Orthodoxy. One other characteristic of Mr. Adams needs to be remembered and that is his courage. He was a brave man; for it requires the very highest species of courage for a man to come out from a church, where for many years, he had been an honored minister, and to reject those doctrines which he had taught. His old friends looked coldly upon him, and some would have nothing to do with him. Yet he persevered and championed the unpopular side till the day of his death. The test of his religion was his character, which was pure and exalted; he was ever full of merriment and on the lookout for opportunities to enliven others. Illness and misfortune never roused him, but to the end he was bright and cheery. Bitter against orthodoxy he was ever gentle to the orthodox.

In his theological debates he was keen, audable, unsparing in his attacks on what he believed to be the great enemy of human progress. Rightly he thought it his duty, whenever opportunity offered, to denounce those monstrous doctrines taught and believed by many; of eternal misery, the atonement by the blood of Jesus, and the infallibility of the Bible. He ever insisted on the great Unitarian affirmation of the divinity of man, salvation by character individual responsibility, continual inspiration in all ages. As to the future he was in doubt, but he ever affirmed that if a man made the most of this life which now is, the future could have no terror in store for him.

My friend had no fears of the future; he wanted to live; he enjoyed life; I doubt if there was a happier home in Salem than his; but he was not afraid to go. No fear of hell tormented him; no belief in the anger and hatred of God tortured him. He knew that the only hell which existed for him he had in his own heart. He knew that if he loved his neighbor and lived at peace with all men he was in heaven. Whatever men may say of Mr. Adams' theology, of his lack of faith, of his denials of what many believe, no one will deny that he was a good man. Thoroughly honest and incorruptible, harming no man, gentle and loving, he was a citizen who knew his duty and did it, a friend always faithful, a

tender husband and father, I do not believe he had an enemy in the world except those who were enraged by his theological arguments. We have lost from our midst one whose example was a shining light to the young.

The friends of religious liberty in Oregon, whether Unitarian, Baptist or Secularist, have lost an ardent advocate of freedom. He ever insisted on entire religious freedom and rebelled at any attempt to curb freedom of speech or freedom of thought. His pen was active in advocating religious liberty. He took advanced ground, to which some could not follow him, but on which, before the next century closes, all will stand. I know well that he could not be better pleased than through me today to again protest against that orthodoxy which he so cordially detested. When I had spoken with more than usual vigor against that monster, he has often said to me, "You did not put it half strong enough." To orthodoxy, with its artificial plan of salvation, which permits nine-tenths of humanity to be lost, with its travesty of God, who is represented as hating his own innocent children, with its sacred book which in the letter commends injustice and even crime; to orthodoxy which has in the past caused rivers of blood to flow, which has calmly watched the fires slowly consume men and women whose only crime was that they could not accept certain unreasonable doctrines; to orthodoxy which has arrayed father against mother, children against parents and nation against nation; to orthodoxy, the fertile source of hypocrisy and persecution, he was never weary of trying by the most powerful arguments he could prepare and in the strongest words he could find, to convince the Christian world that orthodoxy was the most cruel devil which the world has ever known. That a custom or a belief was accounted orthodox was enough to at once secure its rejection. That an idea was heterodox, that an opinion was accounted heretical, that a thinker was accounted dangerous by the orthodox Christian church, rendered him hospitable to the idea or opinion and friendly to the thinker denounced as dangerous.

Now that our brother's voice is silent, and his pen can no longer expose the errors and superstitions of those accounted orthodox, who prize above the spirit the letter, who dread too much light, who value the sect more than Christianity, and Christianity more than universal religion, we must be on the alert and with more enthusiasm than ever enter on that eternal battle between truth and error, light and darkness. By devotion to the cause our brother loved, by enthusiastic work for religious free-

dom, we shall better than in any other way keep his memory green. Like him, whatever we find to do, may we do it with all our might.

A good man has gone from among us, and it is but right that we should recall his goodness and regret his departure. After all, friends, the only thing which endures is righteousness; though the man be gone, the memory of his righteousness remains.

## How the Quakers Educate.

At the yearly meeting of the Friends' church, which convened here in Newberg, last June, the following resolutions were passed:

That it is the sense of this meeting that no teaching, either by teacher or text book, should be permitted in Pacific College that in any way discredits the authenticity of any portion of the bible. It is further expressly declared to be the sense of this meeting, that in all bible teaching its truth is to be admitted without question.

To call that process of stuffing, "education", is a libel on the word. An institution conducted in that way should not be called Pacific College, but Pacific Asylum—a dumb asylum, at that, where a student does not amount to as much as an interrogation point. He not only must not have an opinion, but he must not ask questions. A professor in such an asylum does not need brains. He should be furnished with a bellows, or a syringe. Are these people honest? If they believed the authenticity of the holy book could be proved, would they fear investigation even under their own professors? In their inner consciousness they know it is a holy sham that will not bear to be enquired into. They have separated their religion from their intellects and based it upon stupidity. They depend now upon scaring each other into the kingdom.

Last winter I was passing by Porter's store in Newberg and I saw in the window an inscription which read, "Chew Navy Plug". The next thing I came to was a bulletin board on which was scrawled "Prepare to meet thy God". They were having a big scare and this was the result as recorded in the report in the yearly meeting. "At Newberg a series of meetings of seven weeks, 72 sessions, was held under the care of A. T. Ware, which resulted in much good to the church as a whole and many were definitely blessed." Seven weeks without a convert. But they had better luck elsewhere. The report says that "at Portland a series of meetings of eight sessions was conducted by F. M. George, resulting in the conversion of twenty or more children." If they believed Jesus they would understand that those children were in the kingdom of heaven already. Where were they after they were