

CALVIN COBURN

Calvin, son of Deacon Samuel and Deborah (Hall) Coburn, born in Windham, N.H., April 15, 1815, died at Cambridge, Mass., July 4, 1902, and left a memory so pure and honorable as to merit more than a passing line, especially from one who knew him from the pastor's point of view.

At eleven years of age he began to help himself and the family (which had more piety than dollars) by working in a cotton mill at Dracut, Mass. When opportunity offered he learned the trade of carpenter and worked at it till he had married and made a home in Lowell. But "hard times" diminished the business there so much that he was compelled to seek work elsewhere. Among other places he visited Cambridge; here he saw for the first time an organ factory and at a venture asked if a carpenter could get work there. He was hired and proved a valuable acquisition to the builder, Mr. George Stevens, afterward mayor of the city. Most accurate in handiwork and keen in detecting organ tones in pitch and quality, he became foreman of construction and testing and was later entrusted with the care of setting up organs in the churches and halls for which they were made, testing and introducing the instruments and closing the contracts with the purchasers--business calling for rare skill, fidelity and fairness. For a quarter of a century with that firm he made a success of the department. Later, from changes in the firms and his advancing years he confined his attention to shop work, still entrusted with very responsible matters, passed his eighty-seventh birthday in the daily toil and ceased only two weeks before his death.

His son, Charles F., whom he trained in the business, has become quite as successful as the father in the line of setting up the instruments, now so intricate, built by the firm, the Hutchings Votey Co., for which they both have been working some years.

Meantime, the boy never lost faith of obedience in the precepts and examples of his childhood home; the Assembly's Catechism brought forth its usual fruit and Mr. Coburn became an active, unvarying helper in the East Cambridge Church for a time, then since 1855 in the Old First Parish Church of Charlestown, where his son, daughter and grandson are still strong forces. His older son, Dr. George, became a physician, most popular and clean in his xxxxxx in Cambridge, till his untimely death in a recent year.

Mr. Coburn married Mary Rundlett, who was a most valuable helpmeet thirty-eight years; then passed away at a sudden call just as the bells were ringing for church Sunday morning, Jan 30, 1876.

He joined the Odd Fellows in early manhood and remained in full sympathy with the order through life. He was a subscriber to the Puritan Recorder till it was blended with The Congregationalist and continued to take this journal through his long life.

Modest, quiet, clear in his opinions, but not disposed to strife even for the truth, he made many of us love him and his God the better for the interviews we had with him; he was a genuine Puritan. C.H.P.

from The Congregationalist and Christian World, 30 August 1902, page 308