

SOME LETTERS FROM THE REVEREND SAMUEL A. WORCESTER AT PARK HILL

By George H. Shirk

Four recently acquired original longhand letters bring to mind that when Chief Justice Marshall handed down his celebrated decision¹ that elicited President Jackson's "Let him enforce it" comment, he epitomized in that judicial opinion more precepts than he perhaps realized. Of course his decision mirrored the desire of the citizens of Georgia to be rid of their Cherokee neighbors, and the prevalent "nullification" doctrine was deeply involved, but mightiest of all there were reflected the towering perseverance and the personal philosophy and convictions of the principal in the case, Samuel Austin Worcester.

But for the abiding belief in the correctness of his conduct demonstrated by this young New Englander, who refused a pardon² from Georgia's Governor Gilmer rather than desert his spiritual wards, there would have been no convict in Milledgeville penitentiary and likewise no cause for Marshall's opinion.

Samuel Austin Worcester was born in Worcester, Massachusetts, on January 19, 1798.³ He was graduated from the University of Vermont, and in 1823 from the Andover Theological Seminary. On July 19, 1825 he married Ann Orr⁴ and a month later was ordained at the Park Street Church in Boston. His father, Reverend Leonard Worcester, traveled from his home in Peacham, Vermont, so as to preach the sermon at his son's ordination service.

Within the week Austin — as he was known to his parents — struck out overland with his bride, destined for Brainerd, Tennessee, the mission station where he had been assigned for service in his chosen field. They traveled by wagon and arrived at their new home on October 21, 1825.⁵ Brainerd had a special significance to Austin, as his uncle, Dr. Samuel W. Worcester, had been stationed there earlier and at his death was buried in the mission graveyard.

¹ *Worcester v. State of Georgia*, 6 Peters 515, 8 L. Ed. 483.

² Nine of the eleven defendants convicted for a violation of the Georgia statute requiring them to swear allegiance to the State constitution had accepted pardons conditioned upon their leaving the area of the state populated by the Cherokees.

³ Joseph B. Thoburn, *A Standard History of Oklahoma*, (Chicago, 1916), Vol. I, p. 149.

⁴ Carolyn T. Foreman, *Park Hill* (Muskogee, 1948), p. 7.

⁵ An interesting account of the journey is contained in Rev. Worcester's report to The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, quoted in full in Althea Bass, *The Cherokee Messenger* (Norman, 1936), p. 22.

The first task to which the Worcesters set about was that of learning the Cherokee language. Sequoyah had been working on the idea of an alphabet for the Cherokees and the attention of everyone at Brainerd was focused on the possibility of casting the new and still strange alphabet in type suitable for use in printing. This immediately attracted Austin's interest, and he, along with his new Cherokee friend, Elias Boudinot, was at once engrossed in its possibilities.

Family responsibilities soon increased, for on November 7, 1826 there was born to Ann and Austin Worcester their first child — a "meal sifter" as said the attentive Cherokees when they heard that the new arrival was a girl.⁶ Named Ann Eliza, she was destined to devote her life to following the path set by her father in bringing enlightenment to the Cherokees.

In the meantime the idea of a newspaper printed in the newly devised Cherokee alphabet had attracted the attention of tribal leaders, and a printing plant was established at New Echota, Georgia. Naturally Austin Worcester was the man for the job, and on November 29, 1827 the Worcesters arrived in New Echota. From then on Austin was required to divide the time of his busy life between the publishing work and his missionary responsibilities. The press and type arrived in late January, 1828, and the energy and ability of the little group at New Echota are well shown by the fact that the first issue of the new newspaper, *The Cherokee Phoenix*, was published on February 21st. It was in that same year that the Worcesters' second child, Sarah, was born.

The efforts of the little band of workers at New Echota were soon to be disrupted, for there were forces and influences at work that even Worcester and his Board were powerless to avert. Gold has been discovered in Georgia, and the increased white population made it inevitable that the Cherokees must give up their lands and seek homes elsewhere. The election in 1828 of Andrew Jackson as President was the final blow; and an Act was soon passed annexing all of the Cherokees tribal lands to the State of Georgia. The State followed suit by the adoption of a series of vexatious statutes designed to confine and restrict the Cherokees and to pave the way for the acquisition of their lands by the ever increasing white settlers. In the midst of this conflict Austin Worcester, together with his friend, Doctor Elizur Butler, stood as the only imperturbable pillar of strength.

In May 1831 Governor George Gilmer of Georgia wrote to Worcester requesting him to "remove from the territory of Georgia occupied by the Cherokees."⁷ To make sure that the Governor's letter

⁶ *Ibid.*, p. 67.

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 130.

could not be misconstrued by its recipient, it was delivered in person by the Commander of the "Georgia Guard." The illness of Ann Worcester incident to the birth of their third child, Jerusha, made it impossible for Austin to accede to the Governor's "request." The matter came to a head on July 7, 1831, with the arrest of Worcester. Released from confinement on a writ of Habeas Corpus, Austin could not return in time to be with his family at the death of the new baby.

The offense for which Worcester was arrested was technically that of refusing to take an oath that he would support the constitution of the State of Georgia. His trial was held on the 16th of September; and he, along with Doctor Butler, was sentenced to four years at hard labor. Upon their confinement in the penitentiary at Milledgeville there began the series of celebrated legal maneuvers that culminated in the brilliant opinion by Chief Justice Marshall of the United State Supreme Court, holding the Georgia statute unconstitutional. The local Georgia court ignored the mandate of the Supreme Court, but the impasse was eventually resolved by Worcester accepting a full pardon from the new state governor.

To stay on in Georgia was impossible; and in April the Worcesters again took up a long trip overland and moved with the migrating Cherokees to their new home in the West. Their destination proved to be Dwight Mission, in the Cherokee county west of Arkansas. From there he wrote to his brother-in-law, Samuel Chandler, of Bedford, New Hampshire:

Dwight, Western Cherokee Nation
July 7, 1835.

Dear Brother,

We had the happiness at Brainerd, on the 25th of March, to receive your kind & interesting letter dated Feb. 26th, for which you have our hearty thanks. It should have been answered sooner, but for our subsequent journey to this place, and the necessary duties preceding and following that removal. We left Brainerd on the 8th of April, and arrived here on the 29th of May, after a protracted journey. The state of the roads forbade our taking a direct course, and required a very circuitous route through Kentucky, Illinois & Missouri. One week we were detained by sickness on the part of Mrs. W. She had a slight bilious fever, occasioned, we suppose, by a chronic affection of the liver. This was in Kentucky. Afterwards she gained strength on the way, and has been as well, or even better, since our arrival, than before we left B. We were also detained some by high water and other causes. We are now in a country generally said, by its inhabitants, to be less healthy than our former residence; but we think we have followed the manifest leadings of Providence, and trust Him to appoint our lot, whether sickness or health, life or death.

- At this station we are but sojourners, expecting in a few weeks to remove to Union, formerly an Osage station, but now within the Cherokee country; and not even there to be permanently located, but merely to occupy buildings which are now vacant, and commence operations in publishing books, to be continued there until we can erect buildings at a new and more eligible station. The press is already at Union, and the printer is making preparations for printing, and will be printing, as we expect, before many days.

We thank you for the kind & sympathetic manner in which you refer to the trials which we were called to experience in consequence of the injustice of the state of Georgia. Our personal trials, however, in that affair, we regard as but a small thing; and would gladly endure them again, and far more than them, if by that means the honor and character of our country could be retrieved, and the people for whose good we have labored restored to their former prospects. But in this respect, as well as in every other, it becomes us quietly to submit to His appointments, who orders all events, by whatever inferior agents they may be brought about, and orders them all in infinite wisdom and goodness.

Respecting that portion of our father's estate which falls to us, and which we have not yet received, we have not been anxious, though we were glad to receive the account you were so kind as to give us. We have concluded to request you to pay over to Mr. Hill, the Treasurer of the Board of Missions, all that is now in your hands as soon as convenient, and the remainder as fast as it can conveniently be collected. An order to that effect we shall append to this letter. Our object is to have Mr. Hill invest the amount as so to have it draw interest, and to pay the whole or a part of that interest to the American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions, adding the remainder—if we direct only a part to be paid to the Board—to the principal from time to time, until we otherwise direct. We shall of course write to him, authorizing & requesting him to receive it, and invest it according to our wish, which we have no doubt he will be willing to do. We do not understand—as I am not a business man—whether the security which we are required by the decree to give for the refunding of our portion of any claim which should afterwards be made good against the estate is anything more than our own obligation or not, nor do we know in what form it should be given. We add our obligation to the order. If it is deficient either in substance or in form, so that it will not warrant you in paying over the money, we will be much obliged to you to give us particular information what we ought to do in regard to that, as well as in every other point where you perceive or suppose we need information.

You inquired respecting things as we should leave them where we then were, and as we should find them in Arkansas, & the country & climate here. Upon all these topics I do not know where to begin. We left the missions in "the old nation" in rather a state of perplexity, on account of the uncertainty of the prospects of the nation, and the difficulties occasioned by the encroachments of the whites. The surrounding states extending their laws, & carrying them into effect more & more among the Cherokees, and the Cherokees distressed and in confusion, pressed on every side to leave their country, and still clinging to it, some indeed hesitating, and many waiting to see what the others would do, while many seemed determined at all events to die on the soil. Intemperance increasing, especially in the Georgia part of the nation, and threatening to overwhelm a large part of the population. Religion in all the churches connected with our Board, except one, rather declining, in that one perhaps gaining ground. Still, much good had been done, and some good was evidently doing. *There* is probably at least three or four times as great a population as *here*. The best remaining hope for them seemed to us to be in a general removal to this country, but there was little prospect in their consenting to remove. You have heard of a treaty being negotiated by a delegation from a small minority of the people, at Washington. They hoped the majority would ratify it, but that appears to be highly improbable. We hope the best for that people, but we have many fears of their destruction. If I compare the people here with those in the old nation—perhaps in point of civilization there is not, in the aggregate, a wide difference. There are more here, in proportion to the whole number, of mixed bloods, than in the old nation, and a much larger part talk English. Yet in the old nation there are

men of greater intelligence than here, and a much greater amount of intelligence, taking the body of intelligent men here & the body of such there collectively. In political institutions they are here far behind what they were there, before the States interfered with their government. Religion has less footing here than there. There is more open opposition here to missionary efforts. Here, among those who do not speak English, not so large a portion can read their own language with profit as there, and there is less interest in learning the art. On the whole the prospect would be brighter there than here, were it not for the dark cloud which has arisen in consequence of the injustice & cruelty of our own country. Still I believe the progress here is onward, and that we have ground to hope for success; especially if the body of the people there should before long be induced to come hither. As to soil, if we take only the eastern part of the land allotted to the Cherokees here, I apprehend it is not inferior, on the whole, to the old nation. The more western part consists in great part of extensive prairies, where the want of timber renders the country worthless, at least for a long time, to the Cherokees; & still farther West it is uninhabitable altogether. Yet I suppose there is room enough for all the Cherokees within the limits of pretty good soil. Mill-seats are scarce. Of the health I have already spoken—at present intermittent and bilious fevers prevail here, more than there.

We were much gratified to receive the account you gave us of the different members of your family. We sympathize with you in your affliction respecting Samuel's health, and should be glad to hear how it is with him now. We hope he may recover & live for much usefulness; but if it should be otherwise, we pray that God will sanctify the dispensation of your spiritual goods. What are all things earthly, if heaven be our portion?

I have already spoken of Ann's health. The rest of us are very well. Ann writes with me in much love to yourself and sister Chandler & all yours.

Assure all our relations at Bedford of our affectionate remembrance.

Yours affectionately,
S. A. Worcester.

P. S. I had forgotten to speak of our cousin, Jas. Orr, who is superintendent of secular concerns at this station, and is a valuable missionary. Ann says he has a good deal of the Orr about him—which, indeed, is plain enough—and that, as far as she can recollect, he considerably resembles his father. He and his wife send their love. He says he remembers Mrs. Chandler, but thinks she will not remember him, as he was but a boy when he saw her. They have but one son living, about 10 or 11 years old. They have buried three, all sons. His mother, as well as his father, is dead; of his brothers Phineas only survives; and Mrs. Aiken also is dead. Three sisters are living, as far as he knows. Mrs. Orr, you perhaps know, was Minerva Washburn, a cousin of the Rev. Mrs. Washburn of this station, who came out with him. She is a valuable woman.

By the fall of 1835 the Worcesters, as planned, moved to Union, and the press was soon in operation. The next spring there was born to the Worcesters their fifth child, but first son, Leonard.⁸

In the summer of 1836 Austin decided on the permanent site for his press and mission station. Named Park Hill, the site soon became the cultural and political center of the Cherokee Nation. The Worcesters moved⁹ to their new home at Park Hill on December 2, 1836;

⁸ Foreman, *Park Hill*, op. cit., p. 59.

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 10.

and it was there that Austin was destined to serve out the rest of his full and useful life. It was from Park Hill that the other three letters were written.

They are here quoted in full and each is an excellent insight into the character and personality of this great citizen of Oklahoma.

Park Hill, Aug. 1, 1844

My Dear Father,

The next day after my last letter to Ann Eliza¹⁰ was mailed, I attended a church meeting—riding in a wagon and sitting with my foot laid up—and during the meeting I noticed a stinging sensation on a particular spot on my leg. Returning home, I discovered a small spot of canker. That, in spite of what remedies I know how to use, become a small eating ulcer. After a few days, however, its progress was arrested, and on the morning of the Sabbath before last—or Monday I believe it was—I found it healed over. Last week I was about to write that I was recovering from my lameness, but beginning to doubt it concluded to wait one week before I reported progress; and now that the week is gone, I do not perceive that I have much if any progress to report. Yet I am not very lame, nor do I suffer much pain, nor is there very much swelling. Yet the swelling, what there is, does not seem to abate, except as it diminishes every night, and increases every day. I walk about considerably, but have not perhaps walked more than half a mile at a time; though I could do it without much present inconvenience. Walking seems to affect it much less than standing, or even sitting with my foot down upon the floor. So the greatest inconvenience I suffer is being compelled to sit with my foot elevated, and being *comparatively* though by no means closely confined. What pain I feel at present is more a sensation of *burning* than anything else, and that I feel often when the skin is quite cool to the touch. I have had also for three weeks perhaps a lameness in my right arm, not very considerable, nor increasing at all. It had been lame at intervals before—now constantly.

I think I wrote to Ann Eliza that my disease was scrofula. So I supposed—but Dr. Butler¹¹ thinks it is not so, but a disease not extremely uncommon here, arising from the miasma of the climate. The ulcer he thought was of the class called *fever sores*. Certainly it did not answer the description of a scrofulous ulcer. And so perhaps my lameness might be called “fever in the leg”. Whatever it be such remedies as I have been able to apply seem only an

¹⁰ Early in 1843 Ann Eliza left Park Hill for St. Johnsbury, Vermont, where she lived at the home of her Uncle, John Worcester, while attending school. Because of the failing health of Miss Avery, the Board appointed Ann Eliza as teacher at the Park Hill Mission, and she returned to her post February 7, 1847, and at once took up her new duties. A remarkable student and scholar, she was one of the first women in the United States to receive the degree of Ph. D. On April 15, 1850, she married the Rev. William Schenk Robertson. The couple continued their missionary work at Tullahassee Mission in the Creek Nation. They were the parents of the Hon. Alice Robertson. Ann Eliza Robertson died in 1905. (See Carolyn Thomas Foreman, “Report of the Reverend R. M. Loughridge, Creek Mission,” and Virginia E. Lauderdale, “Tullahassee Mission,” in *The Chronicles*, Vol. XXVI, No. 3, [Autumn, 1948].—Ed.)

¹¹ Rev. Dr. Elizur Butler was a life long friend and associate of Rev. Worcester. He was imprisoned with him at Milledgeville, and was the other principal in the celebrated legal battle between the United States Supreme Court and the State of Georgia. He was born in Connecticut on June 11, 1794. He died in 1857.—Thoburn, *op. cit.*, p. 149.

palliate not to *cure*. Dr. Butler relies almost wholly on internal remedies, and they do not seem to be of much effect.

Twice since I wrote to Ann Eliza I have preached, but sitting in a chair with my foot elevated. I also attended the temperance meeting on the 11th July, going and returning—five miles—in a carriage!¹² One or two other Sabbaths I would have preached, sitting, but Mr. Foreman preached for me.¹³

Now I have let you know my state as well as I can. I rather think it is not scrofula that affects me, and therefore have more hope of recovering. Perhaps the disease will gradually wear away, even though *medicine* should prove vain. If it is not scrofula I think I shall see over before very long, perhaps at the approach of cold weather, if not before. In the meantime I have great reason to be thankful, and hope I am so in some measure, that I am able to write and study not much less than if I were in perfect health.

Mrs. Worcester's health is not very good, but not much more unwell than she is much of her time, so that we may say nearly as well as common. Our teacher, Miss Avery,¹⁴ too is rather feeble. Our little Mary has had considerable fever this forenoon, but is running about this afternoon, though rather feeble.¹⁵ Hope she will be well again in a day or two. It is a striking difference between the fevers of this climate, and those of your part of Vermont, at least as I recollect them, that here a man may have as much fever as would *there* have seemed to ensure his confinement for at least a week or two, and even to put his life in much danger, and the very next day or at most the next but one, may be about his ordinary business, apparently free from disease, and but moderately reduced in strength. This, however, is not often effected without a free use of quinine or some kindred remedy.

It seems almost too late to allude to the intelligence in your letter, which was dated Jan. 2. I hope brother Isaac's trials will be sanctified to him in his partner, and blessed to you also, who I suppose, feel the loss of your grandchildren almost as of your own. It sometimes seems as if you were likely to survive almost all your posterity. To me, however, God has been very kind in regard to the lives of my children, having yet called me to mourn the loss of little Jerusha!¹⁶ alone. I still desire your earnest prayers for us, that we may soon be permitted to see them all numbered with the flock of Christ.

¹² Rev. Worcester had a life long interest in the temperance movement. Soon after his arrival at Park Hill he formed a temperance society, and remained throughout his life one of its staunchest supporters. Rev. Foreman served as secretary of the Cherokee Temperance Society, and the two were tireless workers in its behalf.

¹³ Rev. Stephen Foreman settled at Park Hill in 1839 and soon became one of Rev. Worcester's most intimate associates in the mission and printing work. Together they translated a great portion of the Bible into Cherokee. Foreman was born in Georgia October 22, 1807, and except for an interlude in Texas during the Civil War, he devoted his entire life at Park Hill to serving the Cherokees. He died Dec. 8, 1881, and is buried at Park Hill.—Foreman, *Park Hill*, *op. cit.*, p. 61.

¹⁴ Miss Mary Avery was a teacher and assistant at the Park Hill mission. She was born in Massachusetts December 13, 1819, and was a graduate of Mount Holyoke. She arrived at Park Hill Jan. 7, 1840. She taught at Park Hill until failing health forced her to relinquish her post to Ann Eliza Worcester. Miss Avery married Rev. Mr. Loughridge in 1846, and died at Tullahassee Mission Jan. 26, 1850.—Foreman, *Park Hill*, *op. cit.*, p. 61, and references in fn. 10, *op. cit.*

¹⁵ Mary Eleanor Worcester was Rev. Worcester's seventh and last child. She was born at Park Hill July 23, 1840. Her mother, Ann Orr Worcester, died in childbirth.

¹⁶ Rev. Worcester's third child, a daughter, Jerusha, was born at New Echota Feb. 27, 1831. The child died August 14 of the same year.—Bass, *op. cit.*, p. 137.

Most of the old men you mention as having died in Peacham I well remember. Mr. Benjm Bailey I hardly think I *do* remember. Yet I remember a man who it seems to me was a brother to Capt. L. Bailey, who lived in or near Grotan, and who, I think, when I was rather small, was married to a woman, whose former husband was not certainly known to be dead, but had not been heard of for some years. Was he the man? I should have thought him rather younger than you. Old Mr. Northrop I knew of, and it seems as if I had barely seen him. I knew a young man, the inventor of a cheese-press. Was not he a son of old Mr. Northrop? and his name Benjamin? And was it not he who built a small neat house in "The Hollow," and lived there? Did he marry a step-daughter of Capt. Ashbel Martin or whom did she marry? I once took tea in the house of the man I mean. Augusta Martin—whom did she marry? Olive Martin—was it she that Hazen Merrill married? I think you will wonder—and so do I—at the confused recollection which I retain of the friends of my childhood—that is those who were less intimate. But I like sometimes to have my memory refreshed. The rest of the old people whose death you mention I remember very well.

Ermina¹⁷ unites with me in filial love to you and mother, and so do your grandchildren whom you have never seen.

Your affectionate son,
Austin.

Friday morning. I am more encouraged about my lameness. A dose of calomel seems to have had more effect upon it than usual.

One of the most tireless of the workers at the Park Hill Mission was Miss Nancy Thompson. She was born in Virginia¹⁸ in 1792, and first went to work among the Cherokees in 1826. She journeyed West with them in 1839, and spent her life in their service.¹⁹

She was visiting in Georgia when Rev. Worcester wrote her this letter:

Park Hill, May 5, 1847

Dear Miss Thompson,

Mrs. Ore is very anxious respecting her son, John Brown, who was to go east with Mr. Hitchcock. She thinks he was going to Tennessee with Garner; and that Garner, together with Mrs. Morgan, had laid a plan to get him into mischief and get hold of his money. She wished you to write to me, and tell all you know about him. Did he go with you? How did he behave? Tell these and other things, such as you know an anxious mother would wish to hear.

We are all well. A few met at Tahlequah today, and appointed a Committee to collect money for Scotland. Took up a subscription on the spot, of one hundred and seventy two dollars, most of which was paid on the spot. Mr. Ross gave one hundred dollars. I have got 5 dollars and a half more since I came home.

¹⁷Ermina Nash, Austin's second wife, was born in Massachusetts October 12, 1801. She married Worcester at the age of 39, and devoted her life to the work of her husband. Other than her foster family, she had no children. She died May 5, 1872, and is buried at Park Hill. Foreman, *Park Hill, op. cit.*, p. 113.

¹⁸Foreman, *Park Hill, op. cit.*, p. 40.

¹⁹See Carolyn Thomas Foreman, "Augusta Robertson Moore, A Sketch of Her Life and Times," *Chronicles of Oklahoma*, Vol. XIII, No. 4 (December, 1935), p. 399, for a photograph in later life of Rev. and Mrs. Robertson and Miss Thompson.

I have written just at Mrs. Ore's request. In answering please tell us about your journey, and how you are, and how you found all your friends. Also whether you called on Mr. Blunt, or not, and about his family and Martha's. I forgot to speak again about your calling on Mr. Blunt, and to send them my love.

All send love to you.

Yours affectionately,
S. A. Worcester.

Ann and Austin Worcester's second son was John Orr Worcester. Born in March, 1838, just two years before the death of his mother, he was reared by his step-mother. Like his brother and sisters before him, when his turn came, he went East for his education, joining his brother Leonard at St. Johnsbury, Vermont.

John Orr was a sensitive lad, interested in music, and delicate in health.²⁰ He had apparently written his father demurring to the paternal wish that he follow in the ministry. His father's reply is as classic as Polonius' sage advice to his son Laertes, and is indeed a great human document, cogent and convincing to anyone who may be mentally debating a call to the service of God:

Park Hill, Jan. 5, 1858

Yes, it is 1858, and I have had occasion already to write the date quite a number of times since the year commenced, and perhaps every time have been at the point of making a 7, but I believe I have not done it more than once. But the years fly fast. Let us *use* them as they go.

I received your letter informing me that your cousin Jane Chapin was somewhere in Vermont, and wrote a letter and sent it to her brother William; and the very next mail brought me one from her, dated at Waterbury. She had at length received my two. She does not yet give me a decisive answer.

Last night I received yours of Nov. 29.

What constitutes a *call* to the Gospel ministry?

Suppose an army of 5000 men, and the commander in chief has given orders that 500 go on a certain expedition, but without specifying individuals. Now 300 have stepped forward, and offered to go. There the enlistment has stopped. The commander of the expedition stands waiting for 200 more. Now on which of the 4700 does the obligation lie to be the 301st? On no one? or on each? On each, certainly, unless he can render a reason peculiar to himself—not common to all. If all are on equal footing, then the 300 are obeying, and each of the 4700 is *disobeying*, although only 200 are required, to complete the number. Until it is completed, everyone who holds back, *disobeys* orders. Each has a *call*, and each *disobeys* the call.

Analogous to this is a call to the ministry. Jesus has proclaimed his gospel, commanding everyone who hears it to *receive* it, and to *spread* it. Everyone who hears. There is no exception. There are various modes of spreading it; but the most prominent is that of preaching. In drawing the comparison with the 5000 and the 500, let us leave out of the account all those who are already settled in life. Some of them have, and some have not received a call, and disobeyed it; but our concern is not with them. Our business now is with

²⁰ Bass, *op. cit.*, p. 287.

the young. And of them, too, we will exclude all who have not the power to choose their course of life; and make our army or 5000, of those young men, who have the power, so far as appears, to choose their future employment. To that Army you belong. Now, then, you have to look about you, and see whether the number of such young men, who devote themselves to the ministry, is as great, as the cause of Christ demands, or whether the gospel would prevail more, and more souls be saved, if a greater proportion of the young would devote themselves to that work. The latter is manifestly the truth. The harvest is great, and the laborers are few. You are one of the 5000; the expedition for which 500 are demanded is the preaching of the Gospel; 500 are demanded and the number is not made up. If you are on equal footing with the rest, then if you see that the requisite number is not made up, and you do not enlist, you disobey the Commander in Chief—the Saviour, who bought you with his blood.

“But I am not on equal footing with the rest; for seriously I do not think I could deliver a public speech of any sort.” John, that is a mere chimera—a phantom of your own imagination. You *can* deliver a public speech. If you require a collegiate education, and cultivate your powers as that will give you opportunity to do, and then study theology diligently for even a little while, you will be able, with the love of the Redeemer and the love of souls in your heart to write a good sermon, and to deliver it well. And not only so, but, if you *cultivate* the power of speaking extemporaneously, you will be able to preach a good sermon *without* writing—*studied* but *unwritten*. It will cost you more effort than it would some others, but it can be done. You have the power. If God gives you health and strength, you have only to *try*, and you *can do it*. You can. You can.

If all who are better fitted by nature than you suppose yourself to be for such a work, would consecrate themselves to God, and to the ministry, then you might even be excused—not from consecrating yourself to God—but from that portion of his work. But they will not. The laborers will be few; and in tens of thousands of places where the native is to be, not whether to have such a minister as you can be, but one not better than you can be, or none at all. To have one such as you can be is unspeakably better than none at all.

But suppose your excuse is valid, and preaching is *not* the most useful calling that *you in particular* can follow. What then? What is the most useful?

You say you can get a living some other way. So I suppose you can — much easier than by preaching. If the proper business of life is simply to live, then by all²¹ means give up the thought of preaching, and turn to some more lucrative pursuit.

But you add that, in some other way, you *could* do good, if you were *disposed*. Doubtless you could. But what is doing good? Or *what is usefulness?* Doing good, my son, is saving immortal souls. Usefulness is promoting the salvation of immortal souls. Other things are in some sense good, and useful; but all usefulness which falls short, in its results, of salvation to immortal souls if it is *something*, is yet as *nothing*. The salvation of but one, single soul, infinitely outweighs any amount whatever, of anything else whatever that may bear the name of usefulness.

When you talk of doing good, then, let your meaning be, promoting the salvation of immortal souls.

²¹ The second sheet of this letter, from this point forward, is in the Alice Robertson collection at the University of Tulsa.

When I conversed with you before you left home, and when I did so at Peacham, you told me, in substance, that your greatest desire for yourself on earth was to do good. This is my desire for you. I wish you to attain the greatest amount of usefulness within your reach.

If you desire to do good, can you probably do most good with, or without, a liberal education? I think, with. Other things being equal, he whose mind is best cultivated has the fairest prospect of usefulness. For this reason I had rather you would go through college, whether you are to be a minister or not.

In some way or other—in the ministry, unless it is clear that in some other sphere you can do more good—and your mere dream that you cannot speak in public does not make it clear—but in some way or other I want to have you engaged in seeking the salvation of souls. If among the benighted nations, all the better for that. But whether near your native home, or whether in some distant land, whether in the pulpit or out of it, I wish to have you—to see you, if I live long enough for that—at work for God and Christ and your fellow-men, with a mind as well fitted as may be, by cultivation, to exert an influence over your fellow-men.

Write, as soon as you can, what you have to say in reply to this, and I will write again. But in the meantime go forward. And as for your mother and me, we will incessantly pray that you may be happy and useful on earth, and happy in heaven at last,—that you may attain “the chief end of man”—“to glorify God, and enjoy him forever.”

Ann Eliza was so sick recently with quinsy as to swallow nothing but a very little liquid for near a week. Has in a good measure recovered. Hannah was there—arrived a little before the sore broke. Isaac Hitchcock²² was there this week—left yesterday. It is now Jan. 7th. In 12 days I shall be sixty years old. Hannah is pretty well for her, and your mother tolerably so for her. I am pretty well.

Do tell us all you hear from Leonard. It seems long since we heard from him at all.

Your very affectionate
Father.

His father's persuasive arguments, however, were in vain. John Orr stayed on in St. Johnsbury, clerking in a store, and married a local girl, Julia Snow. He died June 15, 1861.

Meanwhile, Park Hill had lost its most faithful servant and respected citizen. While cleaning a well, Rev. Worcester was injured when a ladder collapsed. He was an invalid thereafter. His daughter, Hannah, with her family, moved into his house to help with his care. He continued to decline, and was eventually confined full time to his bed. He died April 20, 1859, and is buried at Park Hill.²³

²² Isaac Brown Hitchcock, an uncle of Worcester's son-in-law, D. D. Hitchcock, was born in February, 1825. Except for the period of the Civil War, Hitchcock devoted his entire life to teaching in Cherokee National public schools and at the Cherokee Male Seminary.—*Indian Pioneer History* (Grant Foreman Collection, WPA Project S-149), Vol. 98, p. 306.

²³ Foreman, *Park Hill*, *op. cit.*, p. 111.