

Chapter 4

Remarriage of Widows and Widowers

Prospective Marriage in Old Age—Dear Brother Hare: I will say in regard to your first letter received in the mail before the last, I have no special light upon this subject and cannot give you information upon the point that interests you. I advise you to consult with Wesley Hare and his wife, as they know the one you have in mind and would be the proper counsellors. I know, as you say, that you must be lonely in your old age, and if there is one whom you could love, and who would reciprocate that love, I see no objection. But as I do not know the lady you have in mind, I cannot speak as could one who knows both parties.

One thing is certain: You know that He whom you have served for many years will be to you a safe Counsellor. Rest your case with Him who never makes a mistake. Our time now, both yours

and mine, is short, and we need to be ripening for the future immortal life. Christ says, “Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father’s house are many mansions: if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto Myself; that where I am, there ye may be also” [John 14:1-3]. Let us rejoice in this, and take on just as few worries as possible.

The Later Years a Time of Repose—The invitation to old and young is, “Come unto Me, all ye that labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you, and learn of Me; for I am meek and lowly in heart; and ye shall find rest unto your souls” [Matthew 11:28-30]. Thank the Lord, with heart and soul and voice, that there is a haven of rest, sweet rest. It is your privilege, and it is my privilege, to accept the invitation, and rest. We want now that our remnant of life should be as free as possible from every perplexity and care, that we shall have repose in the life of Christ. “My yoke,” He says, “is easy, and My burden is

light.”

The Lord will not disappoint any who put their trust in Him. He will be first and last and best in everything to us. He will be a present help in every time of need. In these last days of service we shall ... be held, and led, and protected, by the power of Christ. May the Lord bless and strengthen you, that your last days may be your best days, fragrant with the softening, subduing influence of His love. The Lord bless and keep you and give you repose in His love, is my most earnest desire for you, my brother.—Letter 70, 1898.

Remarriage of S. N. Haskell—We received Brother Haskell’s [Elder S. N. Haskell’s first wife died in 1894. This letter refers to his second marriage, which took place in 1897, when he was 64 years old.] letter the evening after the Sabbath. We were glad to hear from you that your interests are united as one. May the Lord bless this union, that you may be a strength and support to one another at all times. May the peace of God rest upon you, is my sincere desire and earnest prayer.

“Go, stand and speak ... To the people all the words of this life” [Acts 5:20].

I am pleased, Brother Haskell, that you have a helper [Mrs. Haskell]. This is that which I have desired for some time. The work in which we are engaged has made us one in Christ Jesus to diffuse the knowledge of Jesus Christ. It is your privilege to have happiness in your new relation to each other, in ministering the gospel to those who are in darkness and error. We can sympathize and unite in the grand work that you and I love, and which is the one great object ever before us, the enlargement of the kingdom of Christ and the celebration of His glory. In everything which relates to this we are united in bonds of Christian fellowship, in companionship with heavenly intelligences....

Because of the light given me, I am fully possessed with the conviction that through your united agencies, as sanctified instrumentalities, light shall be reflected to the salvation of many souls that are now in darkness and error. I know you have not lived unto yourselves but unto Him

whom you love and whom you serve and worship.—Letter 74a, 1897.

Advice to J. N. Andrews—I advised you to marry before you returned the last time to Europe for these reasons. First, you needed a wife to care for you and [you] should not have taken your family to Europe without a good companion to be a mother to your children, that these children might not in all things bear the stamp of your mind and be molded according to your ideas. Your mind is not equally balanced. You need another element brought into your labors that you do not possess and that you do not understand is really essential....

Your ideas have been erroneous to preserve your life as a widower, but on this point I will say no more. The influence of a noble Christian woman of proper capabilities would have served to counteract the tendencies of your mind. The ability of concentrativeness, the intense light in which you view everything of a religious character connected with the cause and work of God, has brought upon you depression of spirits, a weight of anxiety that

has weakened you physically and mentally. If you had been connected with one who would have opposite feelings, who would have ability to turn your thoughts away from gloomy subjects, who would not have yielded her individuality, but have preserved her identity and had a molding influence upon your mind, you would today have had physical strength and power to resist disease.— Letter 9, 1883.

You remember I wrote you from Texas to obtain a wife before you returned to Europe. Do you suppose I would have given you such advice if I had had no light upon the matter? Be assured, no such counsel would have been given you without good reason. I was shown [that] you follow your own judgment and your own ideas altogether too tenaciously. If you were more willing to be counseled by those you should confide in, and trust less to your own feelings and impressions, the result for yourself and for the cause of God would be far better.

I was shown that you made a mistake in

starting to Europe without a companion. If you had, before starting, selected you a godly woman who could have been a mother to your children, you would have done a wise thing, and your usefulness would have been tenfold to what it has been.—Letter 1, 1883.

A Son's Interference—[This letter was written July 28, 1902, to the son of Elder George I. Butler, former president of the General Conference. Elder Butler's wife died November 15, 1901, leaving him a widower at the age of 68. As a result of his son's influence, Elder Butler did not marry the woman referred to in this letter. Five years later, in 1907, he married someone else.] I beg of you not to reproach your father. You should not feel as you do, for your father has done nothing that God condemns. His condemnation exists only in the minds of men. He has in no wise dishonored his children. He is keeping the way of the lord, to do justice and judgment. The Lord is opening the way before him, that he may do a great and good work for his people. Christ is his saviour, and in beholding Christ he will be changed into his image.

Your father has been a kind, tender husband. For many years he served faithfully her whom he has always loved. Death separated him from the one who for so long has been his special charge. Then his sister was taken from him, and his home was broken up. Is it any wonder that under these circumstances he should, after your mother's death, become attached to a woman in whose conversion to the truth he was instrumental? This woman is not young, but of an age to be a help to him in his work. Should your father's age have stood as a barrier to his happiness? ...

Had your father married this lady, I believe that the Lord would greatly have blessed them both. But I do not think, seeing that the matter has been treated as it has, it will go any further. Those who refused to sanction this union should remember that one day they must meet the result of their action. But I must leave this matter with those who have been acting a part in it.—Letter 117, 1902.

When Ages Widely Differ—Another cause of

the deficiency of the present generation in physical strength and moral worth, is, men and women uniting in marriage whose ages widely differ. It is frequently the case that old men choose to marry young wives. By thus doing, the life of the husband has often been prolonged, while the wife has had to feel the want of that vitality which she has imparted to her aged husband. It has not been the duty of any woman to sacrifice life and health, even if she did love one so much older than herself, and felt willing on her part to make such a sacrifice. She should have restrained her affections. She had considerations higher than her own interest to consult. She should consider, if children be born to them, what would be their condition? It is still worse for young men to marry women considerably older than themselves. The offspring of such unions in many cases, where ages widely differ, have not well-balanced minds. They have been deficient also in physical strength. In such families have frequently been manifested varied, peculiar, and often painful, traits of character. They often die prematurely, and those who reach maturity, in many cases, are deficient in physical

and mental strength, and moral worth.

The father is seldom prepared, with his failing faculties, to properly bring up his young family.—
Selected Messages 2:423, 424.

Need of Sound Judgment—Dear Sister: I have just received a letter from Charles B, a student in the school at Lodi, California, pleading with me to inquire of the Lord concerning his mother, whom he says is thinking of marrying a young man many years younger than herself.

I am surprised to hear that a mother forty-six years of age will imperil her happiness, her welfare, and her influence by marrying a young man of twenty. This is a strange matter, and reveals lack of sound judgment. The Lord would have this sister consider carefully the sure result of such a course of action.

In this matter, our sister must be under a strange influence—an influence contrary to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. As the mother of three

children, she should feel her accountability to God to move discreetly in all respects, that she may hold her influence over her children, and not pursue any course that they and many others would regard as so questionable. She should realize that her duty to her God and to her children demands the most serious consideration.

My sister, the Lord is not in this matter. Such a marriage would bring strange results—results that would destroy the influence that a mother should earnestly seek to maintain over her own children. This influence I entreat of you to guard sacredly. God has solemnly charged you, as the mother of your children, to bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. For you at this time to take a youth of twenty as your husband would be strangely inconsistent with your responsibilities as a mother of three sons now grown to manhood.

In the night season I was talking with you concerning these matters, and setting before you the inconsistency of the course under contemplation. I advise you to exercise your

ingenuity of mind in an effort to help your children to understand the advantages of loving the Word of God. Show your children that you are cooperating with the Lord in an effort to save their souls.

In the night season it was presented before me that if you should take this strange step, the enemy of all righteousness would use this as a means of ruining the respect that your children would otherwise have for you, and would create in their hearts a feeling of contempt for you because of your lack of good judgment. Satan is seeking to destroy your influence in the home and in the church, and among unbelievers as well.

In past years we have had opportunity to observe several marriages of this sort, and the results have always been of a character to create great misery in the family life.

Now, my sister, I appeal to you to act like a woman of superior judgment. Do, I beseech of you, preserve every jot of your influence, in order that you may use it to the glory of God in giving wise

counsel to your own children. You are held accountable before God for the good influence you may now have the power of exerting. For your own sake, and for the sake of your children, cut this matter short.

In the night season I was saying, Give your children, as a true mother, an example of living faith in God, and thus retain the respect and confidence that otherwise you might forever lose.—Letter 26, 1910.