To Robert Mather:

Dear friend,

Robert Mather

The favour of the 30th ult. I received in due course, I feel disposed to acknowledge thy attention in so promptly apprising me of thy sentiments on the important subject proposed for thy serious consideration. It is almost superfluous to say that as far as dear Sarah Hynself are concerned we unhesitatingly acquiesce in thy decision. With truth I may add, on our joint behalf, that in bringing the matter before thee in the way we did, with our friend J. Backhouse's approval, so far, we were neither of us solicitous that it should be decided either one way or the other, but as it might be in accordance with the Divine Will; nor was it moved in primarily to please ourselves, otherwise, acquiescence in the decision that has been come to would be more difficult than we feel it to be. Having moved on such ground, the remarks contained in thy letter appear to me, in justice to Sarah Hynself, to call for one or two comments; for, though we have not a word to say against thy decision, we by no means concur with thee in some of thy deductions.
Let me remind thee, my dear friend, that in introducing the subject to thy serious consideration, I did not urge, nor even ask thee to give thy consent to the measure; as though it were one on which we were bent. All that I believed it my place to submit was, that deeming it probable it would be more in accordance with thy wishes as a parent, that I should leave Sarah behind in the character of my Wife, rather than again proceed on my religious engagements without such a consummation having taken place; the mode which I suggested, appearing to me to be the only one by which it could be accomplished—How far would such a step meet thy views of propriety? Had this question been decided by thee and the rest of the family in the affirmative, if your judgment been confirmed by that of our Christian friends generally, then we both should have felt a liberty to take the step, if not otherwise.

Now had we been united under these circumstances, I conceive that no "judicious friends" could with any propriety or truth have assumed, that "passion had taken the reins instead of prudence"—unless, indeed, passion could be supposed to have influenced the minds of our Christian friends & connections with whose judgment we should have acted.

With
With regard to the possible consequences of the step had it been taken. We certainly must have exercised little forecast, or have thought very superficially on the subject, had we overlooked the possible, or admit they were "probable, consequences", to which thou hast adverted. And had we leaned to our own understandings, or exclusively to human reason as our ultimate, or only standard of judgment in matters of such vast importance, the subject would never have transpired beyond the limit of our own breasts, or, not even to each other. And yet looking at it even in the inferior light of reason (valuable as it is in its places) Do not sea-faring men and their wives daily brave nearly all the possible consequences to which we should have been exposed? They do it for mere mercenary ends. We should have done it in obedience to the Divine call, to give up all for Christ's sake! Would our conduct have been more irrational than that of the class of men I have referred to? Even the world do not stigmatize theirs as contrary to reason. And in our case the separation would have been but for a limited, though somewhat indefinite period, and then the necessity for separation would have no longer existed; which makes a material difference.

But as for what "worldlings" might have said, so
long as we are but enabled to move under the guidance of
that true wisdom with which prudence dwelleth, whose dictates
are ever in accordance with enlightened reason, though not
always with short-sighted human policy - we may regard
the opinion of the world as of very secondary importance.
I trust we have learned to despise its maxims, its prudence
also, which are but selfishness or carnal policy under
specious names. The wisdom of this world is foolishness
with God, those who lean upon it will prove it but a
broken reed. May we, all we love it are connected with, be
more and more redeemed from its spirit. In many of the most
momentous concerns of life, it pleases the Most High to con-
found the wisdom of the wise (according to this world) to
bring to naught the understanding of the prudent. More
human reason is indeed often a very insufficient guide. Had
the patriarch Abraham leaned only to his own understanding,
or to those of others, he would not have left his home but
hastened to wander in a distant land, as a stranger and jour-
neyer. His reasons for so acting would no doubt be regarded by the
world as but idle tales. He would be considered as one that
mocked. Indeed I need not refer to others. Had I leaned
to reason, or prudence, I should not myself have left my world-
ly calling, and many comforts, to become a wanderer. I have no
certain
contain dwelling-place for a series of years, if I might prudently have laid by some hundreds, perhaps thousands in store, I been applauded for my prudence. But should I really have been enriched? Could not God have sent comforts into my soul, as the just reward of disobedience to his revealed will? And on my arrival in these distant lands, had I consulted reason & prudence alone, I should never have addressed thy dear Sarah with the view of making her, ultimately, my companion for life. Yet acting in faith, in some respects contrary to the suggestions of carnal reason, the Lord has vouchsafed his enriching blessing; he has made us of one heart & soul; he has already constituted us help-meets to each other, in the most important sense; and in due time he will complete, I have no doubt, his gracious purposes concerning us, if we, or others, do not frustrate them; which may He in his mercy prevent!

The acts of faith which I have instanced, are all reconcilable with enlightened reason, I prove to be so in their consequences & blessed effects, on ourselves or others; though short-sighted human reason could not have predicted it. It is the Christian's privilege to walk by faith (not by sight, in those things that bear more immediately on his eternal interests; thus seeking first the Kingdom of God &
his righteousness, he may safely confide in the assured promise that, in the needful time of place, "all other necessary things shall be added." Meanwhile, we have need of patience, that after having done the will of God, however imperfectly, "we may inherit the promises."

The following expressions also, towards the conclusion of thy letter, I feel, my dear friend, as though I could not altogether refrain from commenting upon, though it be but briefly. Thou sayest: "Had I supposed such a separation likely to take place as that proposed, I should have hesitated when first consent was given to propose marriage to her." Now allow me to observe, that when I asked thy consent to address dear Sarah, I distinctly stated what my exact situation & circumstances were, & that it was highly improbable our union could take place until the termination of my engagement with James Backhouse, & subsequent to my return to England, which I led thee to suppose might be years. It was with this distinct understanding that thy consent was given. Why then, the remark quoted above? In charity, I must attribute it to a momentary feeling of excitement that would have been better suppressed, & which, hadst thou the importance of re-reading the letter, thou wouldst exchange..."
I shall therefore endeavour to dismiss it from my mind; conscious that I have no way deceived thee; or could I have acted in any other way than I have done, without direct departure from the order of God's providence.

Now turn to a more pleasing subject. At our last Monthly Meeting in Hobart Town, the propriety of recording our late dear Sarah, and Anna Maria Cotton, as approved Ministers, was under consideration, and decided in the affirmative.

Yesterday being the M.E. Meet. at Kelvedon, the decision alluded to was confirmed, under circumstances peculiarly satisfactory and comforting (as was the case in the first agitation of the subject in Hobart Town) the comforting enlightening influence of the great Head of the Church, by his Spirit, being remarkably prevalent. He indeed remains to be, "a Spirit of judgment to them that sit in judgment."

S. Richmond's case is dismissed from the Books, the Meeting having declined according to her request to be admitted into Membership.

This District has been painfully excited by the sudden death of Lieut. Young, the Assistant Police Magistrate at Waterloo Point, who was drowned on the 1st inst. by the upsetting of a boat, when entering the bar of Little Swanport. Five out of seven were saved. His young & interesting Widow...
has been greatly distressed, but is now a little more composed: she is indeed much to be felt for.

Before I conclude, may I beg of thee to allow Joseph to peruse this letter, as I find he has read thine to which it is a reply. For the same reason, I send it open to Sarah, that she also may peruse it, if it accords not with her sentiments that she may suppress it.

According to thy request, I have shown thy letter to Mr. Cotton & J. Backhouse, whose sentiments I cannot say that I am very well acquainted with; but the former says, that thou consulted him before he left Hobart-Town, therefore thou must be already aware of them as far as he is concerned; & I have little to do with them after the expression of thy disunity.

With love to all,

I remain, with respect,
thy sincere friend,

George W. Walker.