— I think they will be numerous. I hope the Unitarian ministers will join the "League"; it will have a great effect here, on the Unitarian body, and much is yet needed to arouse them to their duty. I hope William J. Fox² may give some time and zeal to the cause. Lord Morpeth's official station will, I suppose, deter him from taking any part in the League; would he not, otherwise? But I might run on so, long. Great things must come of the League....

Wednesday Septr. 30.

...The "Evangelical Alliance" I regret as formed to uphold and strengthen the orthodox sects, quite as much against the heretical, free-thinking & speaking portions of the religious world, as against the Catholics. It does look, too, as if it meant to take Slaveholding under its wing; and, if so, it will be despicable and short-lived. I am thankful that Garrison was in England at the time when so many American Reverend Slaveholders and Pro-Slavery men were there. The fact that they so generously refused to attend the Antislavery League meeting, must be a significant one to British lookers on.

Our shameful War with Mexico still hangs on. We have a report, (but I question its correctness) that Gen. Taylor has commenced his march for Monterey with 12,000 men, provisioned for 30 days. Sickness has been very prevalent and very fatal among the American troops. The issue — so far as fighting goes — will be disastrous to the Americans, I firmly believe; and if there must be fighting, which I do not desire, I hope the United States aims will be defeated. Meanwhile, the Mexican authorities are said to have preferred Pres. Polk's peace proposals to their Congress, which does not regularly assemble until December...

Remember me to your daughter, & believe me,

With respect & affection, yours, S. May.

MS.B.I.6. vol. 2 The May Papers
No. 34 J. B. Estlin to Samuel May

Bristol. October 1st 1846

My dear Mr. May,

... On the subject of the late Evangelical Alliance I can say no more than you will hear from other quarters. The meeting in Exeter Hall attended by Messrs. Garrison, Thompson & Douglass to review the proceedings of the worthy body, was an effective one — On the 7th inst. we have an A.S. meeting in Bristol for the same purpose, when Geo. Thompson comes to lead the attack. A letter to beg him to take up his quarters at my house, is now lying just written, in the desk I am writing on.

To one subject I cannot advert without some regret: it is Mr. Garrison's course of action on this side of the Atlantic, I think he is making a great blunder, & is pursuing a mistaken line. He seems to consider it necessary, for his credit in America, to meddle with all sorts of questions that divide the population of this country — "Universal Suffrage", "the rights of primogeniture," "the observance of the Sabbath," "monarchical form of Govern", &c &c, are discussed in public & pronounced upon by him. He is thus going out of his way to make himself unpopular, & to distinguish his influence as an Abolition Advocate. Every man here is expected to have, and if called upon, to express his opinions upon any of these exciting subjects, but no sensible Englishman who has some important moral or philanthropic object to accomplish, will, uncalled for, volunteer to proclaim publicly his convictions upon such matters. Were the middle & lower classes of this country the parties likely to do much for the Am. Abolition cause, there might be some use in courting their favour, even at the risk of offending higher circles.

But these lower, & lower-middle classes have not sufficient personal interest in the subject to evidence them to take it up warmly; & if they did, they would do you little or no good. It is not kitchens & workshops that need Anti-Slavery agitation for America's sake, but our drawing-rooms, the salons of the wealthy, & the libraries of the learned. And were Mr. G. to confine himself strictly to American Slavery, giving all the information he could, & abstaining from every other topic excepting as which he wished for information, it is impossible to calculate the extent of valuable interest he would excite in the A.S. cause. Multitudes now, instead of seeking his acquaintance, will shun him as a general agitator. I trust and believe, that his visit to this country will advance the object he, & you & all of us have so much at heart; but I do deeply regret that Mr. G.'s influence here will fall so much short of what it might have been. Friend R.D. Webb, would probably not accord in my view, but I am sure I have more ample means of forming a judgment on this point than he has, I am fully acquainted with Mr. Garrison's motive for coming forward on some of the subjects of contention in England, & I hope it may answer the purpose of increasing his powers of usefulness in the U.S. — tho' it should diminish it with us. Henry Vincent was by no means a choice person for Mr. G. to have fraternized with publicly, unless some point of honour feeling or principle, demanded it.

As nothing is likely to diminish the high esteem & regard I feel for Mr. G. & which I expressed in my last letter, I have no hesitation in speaking freely to you on these points. You must take my opinion only for what you think it is worth, but I can assure you mine is the type of the views of very many earnest, intelligent, & calm judging people.

To make you comprehend more clearly in what manner I think Mr. G. is not managing his cause cleverly, I would adudge this as an example. In the National Hall in London, (not a very choice place for its appearing in) he said that were it not for American slavery, there would not, at this moment, have been a throne in Europe! Now if this were a true hypothesis, 49 people out of every 50 in this country would be very sorry to see its termination. I cannot then see the wisdom, or the advantage to the best interests of the A.S. cause, for Mr. G.'s stirring a host of prejudices against him here from some fanciful notion of raising his reputation for moral courage in America? We, here, need no evidence of his magnanimity, independence, & disinterested philanthropy, and if you in America require

² William Johnson Fox (1786-1864) was a famous British Unitarian preacher and hymn writer. He was the editor of the Monthly Repository and author of several works.
Another evil too of a foreigner's intermeddling with English politics, is, the impossibility of his knowing the sort of persons with whom he must patronize. People here are much influenced by the maxim, that "A man is known by the company he keeps." Now Mr. Garrison's intimacy with, & laudation of Henry Vincent who has been in prison for some Chartist exploits, would be sure to detract from his power of serving the A.S. cause in England. I say nothing, for I know nothing of Vincent's worth or worthlessness. I know he is only in favour with persons who have but little power; (even if they cant be made feel the inclination,) to aid in abolishing American Slavery...

Do not be too sanguine about the new Anti Slavery League, as yet, it has no supporters likely to give it much weight. I am in full expectation of an open attack upon it from the B. & F. A.S. Soc'y – a secret one has been going on I believe for some time. I trust however, it may eventually make a good stand...

My daughter begs her kind remembrance. Believe me my dear Sir
Yours sincerely, J. B. Estlin...

MS.A. I.2. vol. 16 1846 Anti-Slavery Letters to Garrison
No. 113-114 J.B. Estlin to William Lloyd Garrison

Bristol. October 17th – 1846

My dear Mr. Garrison,

... You would not doubt that I have been watching your progress thro' different places in England; I have been pretty fortunate in procuring newspapers giving an account of your public meetings. It cannot be otherwise than that your visit to England must excite a great deal of new-born attention to American slavery. You know that my view was at first, (and observation & much communication with others has confirmed it,) that exclusively confining yourself to the subject of Anti-Slavery was the way to secure a willing attention from a most important & influential class of England Society, who would at once be repelled from an American Citizen who, uncalled for, made public statements of his political agitation in this country. It is not that the holding of opinions of any sort is objected to, nor their expression, when circumstances demand their honest avowal; but it is remarkably the case with us, that a person who is a sort of general fault-finder and reformer, is little attended to upon any one subject wherein he is particularly qualified & anxious to impart information. American slavery is by no means yet sufficiently understood with us to qualify people to enter into the minutia of what are called anti-slavery principles: – a year hence, your visit would probably have been more useful. And I think you rather miscalculate the class of persons here who are most likely to benefit your movement, and whom it was most desirable to enlighten. You must bear in mind that your Slavery Institution has remarkably little personal interest with the lower classes of people in England: where their rights & welfare are concerned, movements originating with them are sure to extend upwards; but their voices, if ever raised against Am. slavery, will be powerless on the classes above them. It

abolitionists would do your cause most service.

Still I am quite prepared to believe that the stir you have made, – in spite too of the strength of denunciation which is all but universally condemned, (& regretted by numerous earnest friends of the Aboln. Mott,) will do good, and excite enquiry, tho' less than would have been the case under a different mode of proceedings...

You must not expect much, – for some time at least, from the new League: it has too many opponents, and has not that sort of basis which is needed in this country for giving efficacy to a great moral movement, to allow of its producing any speedy results...

(MS.ends)

MS.A. 9.2. vol. 22 1846 The Weston Papers
No. 100 Mary Carpenter to Maria Weston Chapman

Bristol Oct. 17th 1846

My dear Mrs. Chapman

... I believe that the visit of Mr. Garrison to England will have been of great importance; – he has formed strong personal friendships, I may at any rate say in Bristol, which will enable us to cooperate with him more than he could have done without knowing him personally. I had long desired to see him, & now I feel it a great privilege to be reckoned among his friends....

Why do you not come over my dear Mrs. Chapman, to stimulate the Ladies in England, & that we may know & love you better?–

I must conclude: – I shall enclose a few memoranda in the Liverpool box respecting the contributions

with very best wishes & warm sympathy

believe me ever yours truly

Mary Carpenter.

MS.A. 9.2. vol. 22 1846 The Weston Papers
No. 109 R.D. Webb to [Maria Weston Chapman?]

Dublin Oct 31, 1846

My dear friend

... I am heartily glad to see Douglass go on so well, but I attribute this steadiness very much to Garrison's influence which I suppose would be greater with him than that of any other man... In Dublin owing to the ignorance and indifference that prevail respecting slavery Douglass was little noticed except for a few beyond our circle. But in Edinburgh, in consequence of the stir that
secured some real friends. It has awakened some slumbering fire. I think he was himself surprised at the amount of indifference to the subject, and, still worse, of actual prosley, which he found in England & Scotland. He thinks many of your countrypeople bear away the palm from all on this side of the water for ingenuity in planning excuses for slaveholding, and reasons for joining in social and Christian (!) fellowship with slaveholders & their Apologists. - Whether as you think, he has done some harm, or prevented some good, to the cause, by volunteering his opinions on other subjects, is a question which I feel unable to decide. You must certainly be more competent on this point. But I cannot willingly think that the real advance of any good cause is obstructed by the utterance of the truth with regard to any other. Some timid ones may be offended, go back, and “follow no more” with these plain-spoken advocates of right & justice. But all this shall obstruct the way of right & justice only apparently; so I think, and I have almost, if not quite, learned not to regret the temporary loss which is endured by speaking, & labouring for, the right and the true. These people of experience & policies and the like are the very ones who will desert you at a pinch. Is it not to the entire fidelity and truthfulness of a few that we owe, under GOD, the progress the AntiSlavery cause has made in this country. Surely, to nothing else; such is the testimony of those whose testimony is best worth having.

The principle of the League is a high one, and applies a severe test, I know. But it is the only sufficient basis & corner-stone for the movement. It is making Christ, in the integrity & completeness of his truth, the corner-stone. Many will not indeed accept it. When have the many accepted Christ? His Gospel is one of no compromise with sin & wrong - one of infinite compassion & forgiveness to the repentant wrong-doers; but it is to him as repentant, dating it self to degrees & shades of wrong - and I am sure you cannot; so I need not prove this subject with you...

With affectionate regards to your daughter and all my Bristol friends, believe me,

Ever & most respectfully yours

Samuel May.

MS.B.1.6. vol. 2 The May Papers  
No. 39 Samuel May to J.B. Estlin

Boston, December 4, 1846.

My dear Mr. Estlin,

...I believe I did not, in my letter last Tuesday, say about Mr. Garrison just what I wished to say. I would not appear to dispute your judgment, so much more likely to be correct, as to the mistakes made by Mr. G. in England. Assuredly I will not deny that he made mistakes. He may have gone out of his way to give his opinions on “vexed English questions”, if so, certainly this was a mistake. But, may it not be, that to him it did not appear to be travelling out of the record? Such is the way in which I cannot refrain from viewing it, knowing as I do, how intimately, & habitually, all questions touching the natural heaven-ordained rights of man, are joined & allied, each to the other, in his mind. I know he wishes to be, not the Advocate of the Slave alone, but of every form of injured and wronged humanity; nay, I know he is well convinced that he best subserves the slave’s cause, when he makes it identical with the civil, social & individual rights of every human being. This is the view, I confess, which I am strongly inclined to take of his course in England, so far as I am informed about it; and yet I do not wish to question the judgment you form, for the reason that your position gives you opportunities to form such a judgment which I do not at all possess. - I feel that, if he has been injudicious only, the truly wise and good will soon get above and beyond that, and the cause will not ultimately suffer; but, if it be that it is because he uttered great truths, essential to be uttered in English ears before they can fully appreciate the antislavery struggle, that many or nay turn away from his, I cannot for one find it in my heart to regret, much less condemn, the course he pursues. - I cannot think Mr. G. wished to make himself “unpopular with the middle classes” among you. It is more in accordance with his habit to make his appeals to, and place his main reliance - upon, these. And would it not be to his condemnation justly, if it could be said of him, on his return home, that he had never protested, in England, against Monarchy as a principle, nor against the social distinctions & awful inequalities among your population, &c &c ? - I have no doubt with you, that Joseph Sturge is a relentless enemy of Mr. Garrison. I suspect Joseph Sturge is something like Gerrit Smith with us; - he cannot forego the distinction, the consideration, which he enjoys, arising from his wealth, & from his position among the Friends. He nurses his dignity, and is forever on the watch to see that it receives no detriment. I have therefore thought him very deficient in candour & fairness....

George Thompson, it seems to me, has entitled himself to the heartiest thanks and respect of every lover of Christianity & Freedom. His labors have been very abundant, very timely, very powerful, and I think must have been very effective, also, I read the report, in the “Inquirer”, of his speech on the case of the Rajah of Sattara, and was much impressed by its eloquence & force of argument. I became quite interested in the case. His speech at the “League” in London, on the “Evangelical Alliance” seemed to me a most masterly and unanswerable effort; - indeed all his speeches touching that “Alliance” have been of great ability. I am curious to see how he overthrew Dr. S.A. Cox, at Liverpool. Dr. C. never went near him, I will venture to say....

We are getting members of the “Antislavery League” in this country. Myself, my wife, and two eldest children, have enrolled our names, and taken cards of membership....

With sincerer regards to Miss Estlin, and grateful remembrance to all Bristol friends, I remain

Most truly & respectfully yours

Samuel May