My dear friend,

I feel that I have a great weight of obligation to discharge for the two interesting letters which I have recently been favoured with from thee. Yet at present I fear I can do little more than thank thee with the assurance that every line you write & every pamphlet or paper sent to us from your Land is animating & strengthening to our hearts.

My dear father [along] with a few other Individuals has recently witnessed the commencement of a great — a mighty work — one which he had had much at heart for the last twelve month — the Establishment of a society for bettering the condition of our hundreds of millions of fellow subjects in British India. Of the preliminary steps to this important result thou hast doubtless heard thro' Geo. Thompson & the public papers. The Society was ushered into existence at a large public meeting on the 6th inst. at which Lord Brougham presided & at which Daniel O'Connell pleaded the cause with eloquence & power. It is delightful to behold such a head & heart & tongue enlisted on the side of the dumb. Our poor fellow beings in India are steeped in poverty & wretchedness, ground down to the very Earth beneath a pressure of Taxation which inflicts unutterable misery upon them — nourishes & perpetuates the system of Slavery throughout the world & consequently gives vitality to the Slave Trade with its ten thousand horrors. This must become speedily obvious to all who will be at the pains of investigating the matter. You will see, & many of you do already perhaps, perceive, that the efforts for India, if [brother] at a practical result, are doing your work for you & aim at the very object you are seeking to accomplish — viz. to bring free labour into competition with Slave — Labour is but 2d a day in our own India, from whence we might be under a wise & humane policy, have all the articles which we now obtain from the sinews of the Slave in Foreign Countries. How can the one stand against the other?

The hearings which this great question has on the Anti-Slavery subject renders it tenfold dear to my heart. When you have read & thought respecting it I feel assured that the Abolitionists in America must see it in this light. If you do, I know you will rejoice to lend a hand of help & you may render this infant cause most essential service, by embodying your sentiments & giving a written expression of them to the "British India Society" here — pray think about this — & send a welcome, official or individual or both from your Land as early as possible. It will cheer the spirits of all who have entered on the work — & will tend to enlist the Anti-Slavery party here, too many of whom fear that the present movement is distracting public attention from that cause & who have not investigated the matter sufficiently to see that the British India is in fact an "Anti-Slavery Society." Anything addressed to me I shall always forward with pleasure. I have requested that a copy of the publications of the Society — which are yet but few in number — may be put up & I hope G.T. has written thee as well. He has just been in and tells me I must conclude as the parcel is going. I have no time to buy a new copy but send thee one of my own of T.F.

Buxton's work — The "English in India" contains Wm. Howitt's Chapters on the subject, which I have had reprinted from his larger work, with an appendix containing a few extracts illustrative of the present state of the people there. More of these shall be sent with the [?] & a few other articles which we are gradually mustering together for your fair. There is very little anti-slavery [?] to be had here now — all that seems worth sending, shall be forwarded. Be assured it is a great pleasure to be able to do anything for you however trifling. I have no time to enter into the subject of thy last...

I grieve that differences of opinion should arise among the friends of the cause. I have not had any communications from the opposite party. It wd. be useful & safe for us to know the names of all those who are recreant — whom we have been accustomed to regard as sound. Neither have I time to do more than touch on the deputation on behalf of the Oberlin Institute. They are welcome to our shores & have much interested us in the object of their mission. Geo. Thompson is now in London — his health is I hope rather better than it was some time ago. But his energetic [mind]? wears his delicate frame...

Be kind enough to present the little volume to W.L. Garrison with my Christian regards. I sent a few things & a hasty scrawl to him last winter but I believe the box had not been received....

Believe me truly & affably thy friend

Eliz. Pease.

MS.A. 1.2. vol. 8 1839 Anti-Slavery Letters to Garrison
No. 451 Wendell Phillips 2 to George Thompson

London, July 29, 1839.

My dear Thompson,

I am very sorry to say No to your pressing request, but I cannot come to Glasgow. Duty takes me elsewhere; my heart will be with you though on the 1st of August; and I need not say how much pleasure it would give me to meet on that day especially the men to whom my country owes so much, and on the spot dear to every American abolitionist, as the scene of your


2. Probably Howitt's Colonization and Christianity: A History of Natives by Europeans. London, 1838. William Howitt (1792-1879), Quaker journalist and author of many works of a moralistic nature, with his wife, Mary Howitt (1799-1888), entertained many of the visiting American abolitionists and were responsible for introducing Garrison to some of the leaders of the British anti-slavery movement.

1. J. H. Bell, British Folk and British India, London, 1891, p.70, mentions that this letter was written specially to be read at the 5th Annual meeting of the Glasgow Emancipation Society.

2. Wendell Phillips (1811-1884) came from a prominent Boston family. He first became active in anti-slavery circles in 1837, after the death of Lovejoy, and thereafter was one of the most noted anti-slavery speakers. He was greatly admired by British abolitionists, though he retained his ultra radical views on abolition and other reforms, breaking even with Garrison in 1864 over the renomination of Lincoln, a political action which Phillips in no degree supported.
triumphant refutation and stern rebuke of Breckenridge. I do not think any of you can conceive the feelings with which an American treads such scenes. You cannot realize the debt of gratitude he feels to be due and is eager to pay to, those who have spoken in behalf of humanity, and whose voices have come to him across the water. The vale of Leven, Exeter Hall, Glasgow and Birmingham are consecrated spots, the land of Scoble and Steurge, of Wardlaw & Buxton, of Clarkson & O'Connell, is Holy Land to us. Would I could be with you to thank the English abolitionists, in the Slaves' name, for the great experiment they have tried in behalf of humanity — for providing in the face of the world, the safety and expediency of immediate emancipation — for writing out the demonstration of the problem as if with letters of light in the blue vault of heaven — to thank thee too for the fidelity with which they have rebuked the apathy and denounced the guilt of the American Church in standing aloof from this great struggle for freedom in modern times. The appeals and exhortations which have from time to time, gone out from among you, may seem to have fallen to the ground in vain; but far from it: they have awakened, in some degree at least, a slumbering church to a great national sin, and they have strengthened greatly hands which were almost ready to faint in the struggle with a giant evil. We need them still — spare us not a moment from your Christian rebukes — give us line upon line, and precept upon precept. Our enterprise is eminently a religious one, dependent for success entirely on the religious sentiment of the people. It is in hearts that wait not for the results of West India experiments — that look to duty, and not to consequences — that disdain to make the fears of one class of men the measures of the rights of another — that dread no evil in the doing of God's commands — tis on such that the weight of our cause mainly rests, and on the conversion of those, whose characters will make them such, that its future progress must depend. It is upon just such minds that your appeals have most affect. I hardly exaggerate when I say that the sympathy and brotherly appeals of British Christians are the sheet anchor of our cause. Did they realise that slavery is most frequently defended now in America from the Bible, that when abolitionists rebuke the Church for upholding it, they are charged with hostility to Christianity itself, they would feel this. If we construe a text in favour of liberty, it is set down to partiality and prejudice. A European construction is decisive. Our rebukes lose much of force, when they are represented, though falsely, to spring from personal hostility — from a zeal which undue attention to a single subject has made to outrun discretion. Your appeals sink deep — they can neither be avoided nor blunted by any such pretence, and their first result must be conviction. Distance lends them something of the awful weight of the verdict of posterity. May they never cease. Let the light of your example shine constantly upon us, till our Church, beneath its rays, like Egypt's statue, shall break forth into the music of consistent action. England too is the fountain-head of our literature. The slightest censure, every argument, every rebuke on the page of your Reviews strikes on the ear of the remotest dweller in our country. Thank God that, in this, the sceptre has not yet departed from Judah — that it dwells still in the land of Vane & Milton, of Pym and Hampden, of Sharp, Cowper & Wilberforce. ... You have influence, where we are not even heard. The prejudice which treads underfoot and vulgar abolitionists — dares not proscribe the literature of the world. In the name of the slave, I beseech you let that literature speak out in deep, stern, indignant tones. ... I am rejoiced to hear of your new movement in regard to India. It seals the fate of the slave system in America. The industry of the pagan shall yet wring from Christian hands the prey they would not yield to the demands of conscience, or the claims of religion. Hasten the day! for it lies with you, when the prophecy of our Randolph, himself a slaveholder, shall be fulfilled that the time would come when masters would fly their slaves, instead of slaves their masters, so valueless would be a slave's labour in comparison with his support. To you — to the sunny plains of Hindostan we shall owe it — if our beautiful prairies are unpolluted by the footsteps of a slaveholder — that the march of civilization westward will be changed from the progress of the manacled slave coffle, at the bidding of the lash, to the quiet step of families carrying peace, intelligence and religion, as their household goods. Mr. Clay has coolly calculated the value of sinews and muscles — of the bodies and souls of men — and then asked us whether we could reasonably expect the South to surrender 1,200,000,000 of dollars at the bidding abstract principles? Be just to India, — waken that industry along her coast, which oppression has kept landlocked and idle — break the spell which binds the genius of her fertile plains, and we shall see this property in man become like the gold in India's fairy tales — dust in the slaveholder's grasp. You cannot imagine, my dear brother, the impulse this new development in England's power will give the anti-slavery cause in America. It is just what we need to touch a class of men who seem almost out of the pale of religious influence. Much as our efforts have been blessed; — much as they have accomplished; — though truth has often floated further on the shouts of a mob, than our feeble voices could have carried it, — still our progress has served but to show us more clearly the Alps which lie beyond. The evil is so deep rooted, the weight of interest and prejudice enlisted on its side so vast — ambition clinging to political power, wealth to the means of further gain — that we have sometimes feared they would be able to put off emancipation till the charter of the slave's freedom would be scaled with blood — that our day of freedom would be Egypt's, when "God came forth from his place, His right hand clothed in thunder," & the jubilee of Israel was echoed by Egypt's wailing for her first-born. It is not the thoughtful, the sober minded, the conscientious, for whom we fear. With them truth will finally prevail. It is not that we want eloquence or Christian zeal enough to sustain the conflict with such — and with your aid to come off conquerors. We know, as your Whately4 says of Galileo, that if Garrison could have been answered, he had never been molested — that May's Christian firmness — Smith's5 world-wide philanthropy — Chapman's daring energy — and Weld's

3. The vale of Leven was a district around the Clyde side which had sent an anti-slavery petition to the United States in 1836 from the women of this area. This petition was later "unfurled over the heads of thousands" at an anti-slavery anniversary in New York.

4. Archbishop Richard Whately (1781-1863), noted theologian and Archbishop of Dublin, was a founder of the Broad Church movement. His study of economics, his liberal view in politics, and his theological opinions, made him a somewhat controversial but still a leading figure in his day. He took an active but not unctious view of the abolition movement.

5. Gerrit Smith (1797-1874), philanthropic millionaire of western New York, was an active member of the Tappan circle. His niece, Elizabeth Cadcy, married Henry B. Stanton.
soul of fire – can never be quelled, and will finally kindle a public feeling, before which opposition must melt away. But how hard to reach the callous heart of selfishness – the blinded conscience, over which a corrupt church has thrown its shield, lest any ray of truth pierces its dark chambers! How shall we address that large class of men with whom dollars are always a weightier consideration than duties – prices current stronger arguments than proof of holy writ? But India can speak in tones which will command a hearing.... But from India, a voice comes clothed with the omnipotence of self-interest, and the wisdom which might have been slighted from the pulpit, will be to such men, oracular from the market place. Gladly will we make a pilgrimage, and bow with eastern devotion on the banks of the Ganges, if his holy waters shall be able to wear away the fetters of the slave.

God speed the progress of your society! May it soon find in its ranks the whole phalanx of sacred and veteran abolitionists! No single, divided effort, but a united one to grapple with the wealth, influence, and power, embattled against you. Is it not Schiller who says: – "Divide the thunder into single notes, and it becomes a lullaby for children – but pour it forth into one quick peal, and the royal sound shall shake the heavens;" so may it be with you – & God grant, that without waiting for the "United States to be consistent" – before our ears are dust, the jubilee of emancipated millions may reach us from Mexico to the Potomac, & from the Atlantic to the Rocky mountains!

Yours truly, and most affly. Wendell Phillips.


London July 30th 1839 No. 3.

Cousin Mary’s last was “a conclusion in which nothing was concluded,” so I number this 3 as a sort of continuation of hers, & to you dear Maria, as it will contain business of yours.

We are in London & have seen Thompson! Wendell intends writing Garrison, so he will then more than supply my deficiencies, but a letter from me by way of a relish. I first saw the ‘Great Panjandrum’ in a momentary call at our lodgings, & he employed his time in urging us to go to Glasgow with him to speak on the first of August. It would have detained us from France ten days or a fortnight, the climate is also cold & damp here, we feared if we waited he might not reach Italy by the last of September or October or I might fall sick as I did last year. So, much as our hearts were moved thitherward, we had to say no. Caroline, you will feel for me when I knew I must decline such earnest entreaties as these, “you will go with us, & I will make you as merry as I can & you shall go by a beautiful route to Lochs Lomand & Katrine, now, will you go? Is there no hope for me?” But disappointment as it was felt it would not be right for us to be

1 Ann Terry Greene Phillips (1813-1886) was the wife of Wendell Phillips, and a connection of the Westons. She was an invalid for most of her married life, a factor which many abolitionists felt acted as a check on her husband's activities, though in fact she encouraged Phillips in his most extreme radical views.

going North when we should be going South. It is sad for me to think of, but I am trying hard to get health & then I shall not be such a stumbling block in dear Wendell’s path. It is no light trial I assure you. I asked Thompson if there was no way of W’s speaking in London, but he said not; they do not get up spontaneous meetings as we do, only at particular times. I find there is no such thing as his speaking unless we go so far as Glasgow. I regret it much, for next year it will be nothing, comparatively, there will be so many Americans here. Wendell has written Thompson a letter to read at the meeting, it will be published & sent to some of you. That was, you know well, as he could not speak. My second & last sight of Thompson (for I was out when he last called) was at his lodgings Finsbury Square. There I saw Mrs. T. also Elizabeth Pease. For yr. particular edification I will begin with the room. About the size of yr. small parlor, Maria, sofa, centre table, books on shelves, & tables, beautiful portfolios for papers, lovely inksand &c quite study fashion. I looked round, a la Yankee, books seemed to be nearly all upon India, directly or indirectly, India in every form – Ah says I, “how many would be glad to be here” & “what would, what would I give to see them, Maria Chapman, all, all must come come next year, men and women too, do they not mean to?” Elizabeth Pease too is very anxious, those of you who possibly can come, should, she longs to see you all, hopes you will come, Maria, Miss Pease I like much. Thompson told us she was his right hand man, his amanuensis, his counsellor everything. Thompson appears very much absorbed in this India question, conversed very little when I saw him, evidently much on his mind. Thompson jumps up & says “now you should see the little articles we have purchased for the Fair, if they will answer. His hands unfold the papers, think of that Caroline, & he says then that blue basket is my taste, that green pincushion with the white fringe is my choice, this little Scotch thistle also –” Think, you will see & touch the things he has handled.

I thanked them over & over for their things, told them they could not imagine how delighted you would be, thanked Elizabeth Pease over & over for the Darlington things two years ago, how well they sold &c. I did all I could in way of thanks & broad hints for the future, I fought manfully I assure you. They showed me one or two specimens of china they are going to send you which I know you will like. They are going to send a good many pamphlets, & some pretty little books, “the Wrongs of Africa,” which I think will sell well. Thompson said something about picking up a few things in Glasgow & sending some engravings of himself which are to be struck off, all of which offers I warmly seconded. I hope he will, but I fear in the press of business these last may fall through. There is no prospect of Thompson’s going to America, & now I know some little of this India question, I think he will do most good here. Should the experiment succeed, (you will have a full account by the pamphlets) it will give slavery its deathblow. They calculate that England can be fully supplied with cotton from her East India possessions. Thousands of starving men are ready to live for a penny a day. The soil is favourable as there is already abundance of Indian cotton there. Time & energy are only requisite, the thing is done. The slave must be then almost a deadweight upon his holder’s hands; for other countries will also supply themselves