

Copy of letter -

Samuel May Jr. to Wm. H. Channing
Dated, Octo. 17. 1858.

Ms. B. 1. 4 v. 7 p. 12

Copy -
S.M. Jr. to W.A. Channing.

Leicester, Sunday Oct 17. 1858.

Dear William;

Our conversation was so hurried, and of necessity, to abruptly terminated, the other morning, that I resolved to take the first quiet hour I could command, to let you see all my thought and my inmost heart in regard to the subjects which were then opened. There shall not be

a division in spirit, if I can help it, between you and me. There is, I honestly think, (as I have long seen it,) a wrong done to us, if the Am. A.S. Socy by the attitude you have taken in some matters. I have long wished to have a frank consultation with you on the subject. I could not bear to open a correspondence, in a critical vein, with an old friend, & one so staunch & true as you had been to me for many a year; and though, many a time, I was on the very verge of saying, "I will write to W.C. and tell him just how I feel, & what I think," yet I never quite came to that resolve, & the whole matter lay undone. With your characteristic frankness, you opened the very matter the other day, upon which I told you at our bro. Richardson's house a fortnight since, & desired half an hour's talk with you. Let me have it now, in this poor substituted way, such as paper & ink affords.

And, first, with regard to the little paragraph in the Standard, which you spoke of as evidence of a wrong bias toward you. I can only say, after reviewing the whole subject as well as I can, I see no ground for your criticism upon it. I do not, of course, know Oliver Johnson's heart with a

perfect knowledge, & therefore cannot say that our sinister
motives actuated him; but I must say I did not, & do not
now, see any evidence of it. It was my hope, and my
expectation, (the grounds of wh. I need not spin out this letter
by giving,) - and I do not doubt it was also O. J.'s hope and
expectation, and that of many another person who intimately
knows your "manners of life" for years past, that you would,
on this visit to America, take many occasions to give a full
exposition of your best and maturest thoughts on the whole
subject of Slavery, such as you had received at by means
of the advantages obtained from several years' view of it from
another country, and amidst new circumstances. The New
York meeting was one of the occasions which (it appeared)
seemed to O. J., (as it does to me) to call for your instructing,
critical, & encouraging word, - in short, which demanded
"your testimony" - for I know no guiltier body of men in the
country, as to Slavery, than the ministers of the country.

With your antecedents, your absence for a time, during
which Slavery has been enacting & enforcing its cruel &
tyrannical purposes in ways which appeared incredible
to the nation a few years before, it was the least we could
do, to expect that a very clear, distinct, monitory lesson
should be given by you, on the most public occasions you
could command. If O. J. thought you did not do so
at N. Y., it does seem to me to have been his duty to say
it; & it appeared to me at the time that he had performed
the duty in a manner respectful to you, doing justice to your
past history, and to the spirit pervading the discourse of
which he was speaking. If he had in any way

misconceived or misrepresented your discourse, you know he would soon have more than pleased to correct his error.

I do not think it quite in point to say, that, neither did you speak of Socialism, nor of Woman's Rights, on both which questions you had formerly taken a leading and prominent position; first, because it may be that you should have spoken of them, in such a way, at least as would indicate to all your hearers your views of ~~the~~ great social wrongs which our Nation is upholding, ecclesiastically as well as otherwise; and second, because those subjects are not, as the enslavement of 4 millions of our brethren is, the foundation of a compromise between the several parties in National Union, by means of which all sides are pledged to recognize and help sustain this great and unparalleled wickedness. — (I did not think this point would have ^{time} read itself out.) —

The principal criticism which I have heard concerning you, from any A. S. apostle here, since you have been abroad, has been, that we no longer seem to have you with us in the cause; that your shoulder does not seem to be, as once, at the wheel where we are stirring; and that, on account of some actual or supposed change in your views as to our National Union with the Slaveholding States, we do not have your sympathy & cooperation. I enclose* with this the hurried note which

* (extract from the note) "May I not 'unblame' beg of you not to qualify or let down your Uncle's testimony, as to the blood-guiltiness in regard to Slavery, and ^{the} criminal responsibility of this Union?"

I wrote to you on Wednesday last, (the day before we were
at the Photographic Rooms) that you may see just what
the prominent point was, upon which I chiefly desired
some talk with you, and where we ^{have} felt your Antislavery
labours to be ~~compromised~~ ^{compromised} and impaired. You appeared
on Thursday last, that your heart was unchanged toward
us & our cause, was most grateful to me; while your
intimation that the abolitionists here are inclined to
show you any unkindness, or do you the smallest
injustice, I am sure, you should repudiate & discard,
as utterly without foundation.

P. But, in our
few words on Thursday last, I referred to another matter
and one which has personally offended and hurt me.
Let me explain.

For several years past Fredrick
Douglass (for what purpose, I will not stop to say) has
been doing his utmost endeavour, directly in his paper, &
indirectly by agents and representatives in this country
in England, to establish the point that the Am. S. C. Socy
is infidel in its principles and aims, disowning the Christian
Religion, & labouring to subvert the Christian Church.

He, & his agents, have gone, with this tale upon their
lips, into all acceptable private circles, have got the ears
of orthodox & heterodox ministers & D^{ns} of Divinity, and, in
spirit of indescribable malignity and slander, have
caused ~~many~~ ^{agents} numbers to believe that we are the inveterate
enemies of Christ & his Church. Their own professions
of piety & loyalty, to the Church have given them an easy
entrance to the confidence of these rabbis & priests, & sectarian
bodies; and they have ostentatiously, and with the coarse
want of refinement & self-respect, painted themselves in
contrast with us — their ^{own} piety & love for the Church, in
contrast with our infidelity & hostility to it! Now, you
knows, my friend, I do not charge you with ~~either~~ any
part in the work; nor does any body, I mean

believe you capable of it. *Fifth*, the fact remains, that you have given much countenance and aid to this man, & his agents, and movements in England, ^{ye,} without any rebuke of their murderous hands towards us, of which the public (so far as I know) have been cognizant.

Now, William, we are not infidels, as you say well know. It is not true in any sense, technical, apothetical, or usual. You could do our cause great service in England by putting your foot, openly and very, where, on the monstrous lie that we are so!

Who, my dear friend, has done the other an injustice? We, to you? or you, to us? - It is no justification of Douglass that he has real or fancied wrongs, at the hand of any of the abolitionists. Revenge, leading to falsehood, can be justified by no circumstances; and only a vile man can be tempted to resort to it. I know of no wrong done to him; but I know he declares that he has been wronged. Be that as it may, I am not, dear William, content to see you take by the hand to hire & embel a calumniator, & give him the benefit of your public alliance and "encouragements," as if ^{he were an} honorable man.

Now, my friend, I have spoken to you, in my plain way, with all sincerity and confidence, and have given you to see my whole heart in this matter. I am sure you see no interest there towards yourself. I know you too well; I know & love you too well, for that. It is no affectation nor any straining of the point to say that I honour your devoted spirit, your earnest labours, your zeal

in the good work to which you give yourself
conscientiously and faithfully. But I see
you in a false position towards our cause and
towards us.

I see (as I think) that you are
giving such support and countenance to ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~accusers~~
of an personal & associate character, as is exten-
sively used by them to imply countenance to the accurate
~~Chandler~~

And I now claim, & shall confide-
ently expect, that you will do justice to yourself in this
matter; feeling every assurance that, in
perfectly doing that, you will not and cannot
be unjust to us, or to any man.

I am, dear William, & wish to be,
Truly & faithfully, Your friend,
(Signed) Samuel May Jr.

Rev. Wm. L. Channing.

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