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Citation

Myerson, Joel. 1986. New light on George Ripley and the "Harbinger's" New York years. Harvard Library Bulletin XXXIII (3), Summer 1985: 313-335.

Permanent link

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New Light on George Ripley and the *Harbinger's* New York Years

Joel Myerson

ALTHOUGH studies of the *Harbinger* usually slight its New York years in order to focus upon its Brook Farm period, for half of its life the *Harbinger* was published in New York, where it was sponsored by the American Union of Associationists. A series of twelve previously unpublished letters by George Ripley provide a rare, private glimpse of the prolonged death throes of the periodical, as well as an account of the agonies of its editor and founder, whose feelings that "we cannot do justice to our ideal" proved sadly true.¹

The Brook Farm community was established by George and Sophia Ripley in April 1841 at West Roxbury, Massachusetts, near Boston. "Our objects," Ripley wrote Ralph Waldo Emerson, "are to insure a more natural union between intellectual and manual labor than now exists; to combine the thinker and the worker . . . in the same individual; to guarantee the highest mental freedom, by providing all with labor, adapted to their tastes and talents, and securing to them the fruits of their industry; [and] to do away [with] the necessity of menial services, by opening the benefits of education and the profits of labor to all." The result would be, Ripley concluded, "to prepare a society of liberal, intelligent, and cultivated persons, whose relations with each other would permit a more simple and wholesome life, than can be led amidst the pressure of our competitive institutions."²

¹ Ripley to John Sullivan Dwight, 7 December 1847, Boston Public Library. Unless otherwise stated, all letters by Ripley are printed courtesy of the Trustees of the Boston Public Library. The letters are transcribed literally, with punctuation and words occasionally added in brackets for clarity. Dwight's letters to Ripley have apparently not survived.

² 9 November 1840, Octavius Brooks Frothingham, *George Ripley* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin, 1882), pp. 307-308.

The first four years of the "Brook Farm Institute of Agriculture and Education" went fairly well. People could choose, according to their abilities, to teach in the school, farm, work in the manufacturing shops, or maintain the buildings and grounds. But in March 1845, the community was reorganized as the "Brook Farm Phalanx" after the ideas of the French utopian Charles Fourier. Each person was assigned to a number of "groups" — Dinner Waiters, Farmers, Workers, and so on — and, in theory, could work in any of them. This strict regimentation upset many people, and the community's fortunes declined. The community was never financially strong; and when its major structure, the Phalanstery, burned to the ground in March 1846 for an uninsured loss of \$7,000, it was mortally wounded. Brook Farm never recovered and collapsed in September 1847. Ripley sold his library to help pay off the debts and eventually paid all creditors personally.

The *Harbinger* had begun publication on 14 June 1845 as a weekly periodical "for the examination and discussion of the great questions in social science, politics, literature, and the arts, which command the attention of all believers in the progress and elevation of humanity."³ Reflecting the new Fourierist orientation of Brook Farm, it acted as the voice of Associationism in America. Within a month, the *Harbinger* announced its circulation had reached "over one thousand."⁴ Generally well received by its fellow periodicals, the *Harbinger* published articles on social, political, economic, and literary matters, poetry, translations of foreign literatures, and musical criticism. In the last area it excelled,⁵ primarily because of John Sullivan Dwight, who wrote most of the over one hundred musical reviews.

Dwight, like Ripley, was a graduate of Harvard College and its Divinity School who had left the ministerial profession. He had earlier published a volume in Ripley's *Specimens of Foreign Standard Literature* series and, through Ripley, had contributed three articles to the *Dial*. Soon after Ripley established Brook Farm, Dwight joined, and his parents and two sisters later followed. He became a

³ "The Harbinger," *Phalanx*, 1 (28 May 1845): 354.

⁴ *Harbinger*, 1 (12 July 1845): 79.

⁵ In "Writings About Music in the Periodicals of American Transcendentalism (1835-50)," Irving Lowens lists 183 items dealing with music in these periodicals, all but twenty-six appearing in the *Harbinger* (*Journal of the American Musicological Society*, 10 [Summer 1957]: 71-85).

valued assistant of Ripley's, teaching music and Latin in the school, and served as one of the *Harbinger's* co-editors and major contributors when it was founded.

In September 1846, when the full financial impact of the Phalanstery's loss became apparent, Dwight was the natural person for Ripley to choose as his representative to approach the newly formed American Union of Associationists for assistance.⁶ From this group — which was responsible for coordinating the various local Associationist organizations, sponsoring lectures, and the *Harbinger's* finances — Dwight raised \$464, which saw the *Harbinger* through its fourth volume.⁷ With the fifth volume, the Union began to publish the *Harbinger* in New York, even though the editing and printing continued to be done at Brook Farm.

The *Harbinger's* actual move to New York came after Brook Farm's collapse in September 1847. The community never regained even its former precarious financial footing after the fire, and last ditch efforts failed to halt the inevitable. But Ripley believed that Associationism would succeed, even if Brook Farm had not, and he left for New York with high hopes. Speaking before a meeting of the Boston Religious Union of Associationists on 17 October, Ripley reported that, "instead of being discouraged by the results of the past seven years' experience he never felt as confident of the divinity of the cause of Association and felt a greater determination than ever to live and work for its ultimate triumph."⁸

The *Harbinger*, too, displayed confidence. At the end of the fifth volume was announced the move to New York and "an enlarged form." No subject, the editors proclaimed, "which engages the public mind will escape its criticisms or its comments."⁹ The opening number of the sixth volume, and the first to be edited and printed in New York, stressed that "the paper is no new and ephemeral undertaking, but, to the contrary . . . is an old, and well established thing," and,

⁶ See Sterling F. Delano, *"The Harbinger" and New England Transcendentalism* (Rutherford, N.J.: Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1983), especially pp. 25-29. I am grateful to Professor Delano for commenting on an earlier version of this article.

⁷ Delano, *"The Harbinger" and New England Transcendentalism*, pp. 47-49.

⁸ Sterling F. Delano, "A Calendar of the Meetings of the 'Boston Religious Union of Associationists,' 1847-1850," *Studies in the American Renaissance 1985*, ed. Joel Myerson (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1985), p. 216.

⁹ "Notice to Subscribers," 5 (30 October 1847): 328-329.

"having survived the dangerous periods of birth and infancy, may reasonably look forward to a lusty youth, and a vigorous and honorable manhood."¹⁰ Such, however, was not the case.

Ripley found himself besieged and bedeviled from the start. He had accepted his replacement as editor by William Cullen Bryant's son-in-law Parke Godwin,¹¹ and had assumed with grace his role as co-editor with a former Brook Farm Farmer Charles A. Dana, with Dwight and yet another Brook Farm supporter, William Henry Channing, serving as Boston editors. He had resigned himself to his own meagre financial prospects, existing on a salary of five dollars per week, supplemented by what funds his wife Sophia could bring in from teaching.¹² But he could not weather the personality clashes among Godwin and his co-editors,¹³ problems with distributing copies,¹⁴ continual editorial spats over Swedenborgianism and Associationism,¹⁵ the lack of contributions from Channing and others upon whom he had depended, numerous typographical errors, and a never-ending litany of financial problems caused by a lack of subscribers, advertisers, and money from the American Union of Associationists.

¹⁰ "Introductory," 6 (6 November 1847): 5.

¹¹ Ripley was probably replaced as editor because of Godwin's closeness to the American Union of Associationists, which was providing all the funds for the *Harbinger*, and because Godwin was better prepared to rid the paper of "the abstract character which, to a certain degree, it has hitherto borne" ("The Harbinger. Prospectus of the Sixth Volume," *Harbinger*, 6 [13 November 1847]: 16).

¹² The *Harbinger* often carried advertisements for Sophia's lessons in English education, classics, and modern languages, with "instruction of foreign pupils in the English language given special attention" (see 6 [5 February 1848]: 111).

¹³ Concerning Godwin, Ripley wrote Dwight on 26 March 1849 that, while conceding some good points, "I dont see . . . how any one can work under him, or over him, or with him, without extreme annoyance; & for himself, he decidedly prefers to write or fight (which with him is pretty much the same thing) on his own hook, to join hands with even an archangel."

¹⁴ Longfellow, for example, wrote Dwight on 10 December 1847 that he "could not get a copy of the paper till some ten or fifteen days after its publication" (*The Letters of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow*, ed. Andrew Hilen, 6 vols. [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1966-1982], III, 147).

¹⁵ As he wrote Dwight on 26 March 1849, "It is intimated that the tone of the Harbinger was too mild, too conciliatory, & hence too negative, until it became sleepy, tedious, & effectivless. As these traits, in my opinion, were the glory & honor of the Harbinger, & made it singularly conspicuous above the spouting & sputtering of the reform press in general, I cannot but think that a work commencing on opposite principles, would be in danger of hurrying to the devil."

The letters printed below show Ripley expressing to Dwight his growing awareness of the *Harbinger's* problems, and his often feverish attempts to solve them, between October 1847 and a few months before the final number was published in February 1849.

9 Spruce St New York, 27 Oct 1847

My dear Friend

I have hardly had time to look round or breathe, with such dinful confusion of moving, getting to housekeeping, preparing an office &c &c.

I am now writing at the desk of Allen,¹⁶ our publisher. I find him a shrewd, enterprising, Yankee, though at the same time, very modest & well-mannered. He shall go to press with the *Harbinger* on Thursday, so that you can get them in Boston on Friday Mor'g, that is if the N.Y. Post-Office will dispatch them in season. You had better send your last batch of copy as a general rule by Monday's Mail, though for this paper, I hope you & Channing both will be able to forward a good supply by Friday's Mail. We shall want a large amount in our new form, & must come out strong the first time, — and at all future times.

I find by the books a considerable amount due from Boston subscribers, — as soon as I can do it, I will get the bills made out & forward them to you, to see if they are correct, & then we may enclose them in the *Harbinger* by Mail.

Shall we send Crosby's Bundle as before, or shall we mail all the Boston subscribers.¹⁷ Please ascertain this.

We find Flatbush a lovely romantic village, — fit retiring place for a philosopher or poet.¹⁸

Hoping to hear from you incontinently

I am ever yours

Geo. Ripley

Flatbush, 4 Nov. 1847 Thursday Night.

My dear John

Every thing you have sent has come safely, although I have known so little whether my head is on my shoulders or not, that I have felt in no mood for writing. Dire was the confusion of gathering up our scattered fragments, & reducing them to some sort of symmetry in our new abode. A like process was to be gone through in the office in Spruce St, which is a moderately skid room up two pairs of stairs,

¹⁶ John Allen had his own bookselling firm at 139 Nassau Street and was associated with E. P. Allen of 9 Spruce Street, the "General Agent for the *Harbinger*, and . . . [in] charge of its business affairs" (*Harbinger*, 6 [6 November 1847]: 7).

¹⁷ The publisher William Crosby, who, together with his partner, William Nichols, published the *Harbinger* in Boston from their offices on 111 Washington Street.

¹⁸ Flatbush, in Brooklyn, was a rural spot with occasional Greek revival buildings built by the rich, about five miles southeast of New York City.

opposite Allen's printing office. It was in the horriddest disorder, dirt inches thick on the floor, & the whole appearance that of nakedness & desolation in the extreme. It was some days before one could get any workmen started upon it, but at last, with the help of carpenters, painters, masons, and negro scrubbers, we have contrived to put it in decent shape. Not that we have yet taken possession of it, for the paint is not dry, nor any furniture put in. When finished, it will be quite a comprehensive establishment, & could you drop down on it, some fine day, you would be welcomed as an angel from heaven. Fancy this "Central Office", the focus of the great Humanitary movement of the Age, — you enter by a decent door at the top of the second flight, — a painted, pine counter, which is to be covered with Harbingers and other Evangels of the "newness",¹⁹ separating the οἱ πολλοί,²⁰ from the inner shrine, — you proceed behind the scenes (put off the shoes from thy feet, O man!) when you find a mahogany secretary, 1/2 doz big arm chairs, a handsome settee, sundry shreds & patches of carpet, a tall stand for files of newspapers, which combines the rare merit of furnishing lodgings for single gentlemen, & in the corner the quiet desk of "St James the Less" as the Editor of the "New Times", modestly styles himself.²¹ All this, remember, Oh John, is yet prospective; but soon the "Idea" will be realized in substantial boards, benches, & other house carpentry.

Meantime, I have taken refuge at a little desk in Mr. Allens printing office, where in company with eight devils of the darkest die, I am at work on the paper, arranging, looking at copy, correcting proof, but thus far, besides scraps & trimmings have been able to write nothing, but a Review of Rogers.²² The situation is just what I fancied, a whirl, not to say a Hell, but I am perfectly reconciled to it, and am content to work in it, till I can work no more. I get into Town at 9 o'clock, & before I know it, or have had time to breathe, it is 4 o'clock, when I go home. I vibrate between Fulton Ferry & Spruce St, 3 or 4 doors from Tribune Office,²³ & for days at a time do not go into Broadway.

Were it not for the exceeding loveliness of Flatbush, I should be dilapidated at once; but here, every thing is delightful, the sweetest village you ever saw, our house is very pretty & pleasant, & on the whole, as far as external relations are concerned, we never had so beautiful a home.

¹⁹ The Transcendentalists were often referred to as the "Apostles of the Newness."

²⁰ "hoi polloi." I am grateful to Professor Ward Briggs for assistance with Ripley's classical allusions.

²¹ Henry James, Sr., father of the novelist Henry and the philosopher William. The reference is either to his *Tracts for the New Times. No. 1., Letter to a Swedenborgian* (New York: John Allen, 1847) or the periodical *New Times*, which James was to edit but which was never published (see Austin Warren, *The Elder Henry James* [New York: Macmillan, 1934], pp. 114-116; advertisement for *New Times, Harbinger*, 6 [6 November 1847]: 8).

²² Ripley reviewed *A Collection from the Newspaper Writings of Nathaniel Peabody Rogers* in the 6 November *Harbinger* (6:4).

²³ The office of Horace Greeley's *New-York Tribune* at 30 Ann Street was two blocks from the *Harbinger's* office at Spruce Street at the southern end of Manhattan.

Give my warmest love to our Pastor William, — don't let a week elapse, O divine Man, William! without many words from you!²⁷

Will you box up all the old Nos of the Harbinger & send them on by Express. Write on thin paper & save postage for the Union[.]

Ever yrs faithfully G. R.²⁸

Flatbush, 8 Nov. [1847] Monday night

My dear fellow sufferer

"What the deuce has become of the Harbinger"? The devil only knows, I am sure, for you will not call the lank, slab-sided concern which you will get tomorrow any relation to our darling pet, & I fear you will incontinently turn it out of doors as an imposter & no child of ours. I wont attempt to describe the perils of the birth. It seemed as if the evil one was stirring up all his caldrons. We had plenty of copy by Monday; a few boys went to work leisurely, but Allen was disappointed in his foreman. On Tuesday, a most demure, dolorous looking gentleman made his appearance with a very rusty black coat & a very white cravat, looking like a decayed Methodist parson, who had been recommended to Allen as a good foreman. We told him the paper must be got ready for the press on Friday morning at the furthest, so as to be ready for the 4 o'clock Boston mail that afternoon. To which he replied in the blandest manner, that it should be done, & supposing that he would drive ahead. Allen & myself attended to our own business, till Wednesday night, supposing that nearly every thing was set up, when this infernal soedolager²⁹ coolly gave the information that only 4 pages out of the 8 was set. Dire was the haste of Thursday, the office filled with extra hands to do the work, & on Friday, having corrected most of the proof, the hero undertook to make up the forms; but it was no go; he could not do it; and it was only by sending for a very smart foreman of a large office where our press work is done, that they could get it up, at all. It was not till Sat. evg that they went to press & every thing was done in such confusion & haste, that the proofs are most scandalously incorrect, & in fact, the whole typography of the paper, very much below par.

We shall make some improvements this week, & I hope things will go a little better. Allen has discharged the white-cravatted philosopher, & today, a wiry looking fellow makes his appearance, who may be able to put it through.

They were all mailed this aft. & you will get them, I presume, tomorrow morning. Dont be afraid to give them your candid criticism, for it is no use to be mealy-mouthed in the matter.

Send, if you please, all the back numbers, & also the Tracts No 1 & 2, in any quantity, directed to my address Harbinger Office, &c. — by the Express.³⁰ Is

²⁷ William Henty Channing.

²⁸ Collection of Joel Myerson.

²⁹ Usually a soedolager (or sockdolager) is a heavy or knock-out blow.

³⁰ Tract No. 1, announced on 7 August 1847 (5:144), was *A Plain Lecture on Association* (Boston: Crosby and Nichols, 1847), by T. C. P. (identified only as "a distinguished advocate of public education in the state of Vermont"), which had appeared in the 5 June 1847 *Harbinger* (4:401-405). Tract No. 2, announced on 16 October 1847 (5:303), was *Association-*

there any a/c of sales for the Am. Union of these Tracts, from Crosby & Nichols, or others.

I have entered on the current memorandum book, all the names you have sent, credited them with the amount, & charged the same to you. When you are ready to settle, please send the account to me, as I shall want it to adjust my book.

Pray dont forget to draw up advertisements *per se* or *per alias*; we must have them, & ought to have them.

We shall try to get to press by Friday, & forward yours the same day. After this week, Thursday will be the day, but you must remember the mails often miss at this season[.]

Our exchanges have also got into an infernal mess. With the exception of two or three Transcripts, not a Boston paper has showed its face, & of course, I miss sadly the Chronotype, to say nothing of the others.³¹ What under the Sun has become of them? Do they stick by the attraction of cohesion at Brook Farm, — or does Mr Functionary Keith,³² sequester them, — or are our beloved Editors so scandalized at the elopement of the Harbinger, that they mean to wash their hands of it, henceforth & forever. Do pray set this matter right, for I am as awkward without the Boston papers, as I should be without my scissors.

You will recognize all the writers in this number, I presume, except perhaps James, who wrote Review of Bushnell.³³

I need not ask you to write me, often & voluminously, — I do not mean as an Editor, but as a private individual; for if you feel the desire for communication with old friends as much as I do, your pen will run on all fours. In fact, my life in New-York is just what I expected, slavish & shabby in the highest degree, — I have to sit at the desk in Spruce St. about 7 hours on a stretch, functioning as a clerk of the Am. Union;³⁴ I dont go into Broadway at all; & on the whole, I fancy, the life is what Hobbes elegantly calls a "nasty life".³⁵ With all the perplexities & short-

ism, as Illustrated by Fourier's System (Boston: Crosby and Nichols, 1847), drawn from the lectures of Victor Considerant. Reprinted from the *London Topic* in the 31 July 1847 *Harbinger* as "Socialism as Illustrated by Fourier's System" (5:113-120), the title was changed because to "most minds" Socialism was "tantamount to Communism," despite its differences from Fourierism on "vital points" (5:303).

³¹ The *Boston Transcript* and *Boston Chronotype* were daily newspapers. The latter, edited by Elizer Wright, was a regular supporter of Associationism.

³² Keith is unidentified.

³³ Henry James, Sr., reviewed Horace Bushnell's *A View of Christian Nurture* in the 6 November *Harbinger* (6:4-5).

³⁴ In an announcement for the American Union of Associationists published in 1848, Ripley was listed as "Domestic Corresponding Secretary" of the organization, whose "office . . . is at No. 9 Spruce Street, New York, where all its business is transacted, and where its weekly organ, *The Harbinger*, is published" (see Charles Sotheran, *Horace Greeley and Other Pioneers of American Socialism* [New York: Mitchell Kennerley, 1915], pp. 144-145).

³⁵ In *Leviathan* (1651), Thomas Hobbes had commented that in war "the life of man" is "solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short" (*The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, 3d ed., ed. M. H. Abrams et al., 2 vols. [New York: W. W. Norton, 1974], 1:1644).

comings of Brook Farm, I miss its freedom & geniality, & were it not for pleasant Flatbush, which is truly an "Oasis in the desert" I should die in the ditch very soon. But satis, super que satis of this.³⁶ Dont think I am losing my good spirits or my aldermanic proportions.

With love to all the saints, yours faithfully

The Archon³⁷ that was, — "the devil take the hindmost"
that is.

Sophia sends you her love & depends on your letters[.]

Dont forget to supplicate a blessing on me from the divine William, and from the diviner ones still, whose remembrance is an inspiration!

9 Spruce St Wednesday Mo'g [10 November 1847]

Dear John

Yours of Tuesday mor'g has just arrived. There was nothing on the books to indicate 20 copies to C[rosby]. & N[ichols]. but Maria Dana³⁸ happening to be in the Office yesterday mor'g, mentioned the fact, & I despatched them in the aft. I herewith send 50 additional copies, which had better be distributed gratis, if any good can be done by it. W. H. C[hanning]'s was sent in C & N's first bundle.

J. T. Fisher 3 copies, B. F. Dwight 2 copies, Ch. Examiner 2 copies, and all the duplicates marked on the book, & Mr Allen thinks he sent them.³⁹ However, if any are missing, they can be supplied out of the 50 copies.

I should be glad if you could dispose of 50 or 100 more copies, whether gratis or otherwise, for we printed 2000 & have a surplus.

Ives wrote the musical article.⁴⁰

Mrs L. M. Keith is put down both for Cambridge & Northampton. Which is right?

On second thoughts, I will send 100 to C & N. this aft. as it will save expense.

The next paper will *look* better by Heavens, or it is no go at all! We shall insert some of C & N's advertisements in the next paper, as a specimen of our skill in that line, & I hope they will decide to advertise with us.

³⁶ "enough, more than enough." This is from Horace's *Epodes* (l. 31), referring to his patron's gift of the farm on which he lives: "Enough and more than enough has your kindness enriched me."

³⁷ Ripley's honorific title of "Archon" or ruler had been bestowed upon him at Brook Farm by Theodore Parker (see Lindsay Swift, *Brook Farm: Its Members, Scholars, and Visitors* [New York: Macmillan, 1900], p. 133).

³⁸ Charles Dana's sister Maria was a frequent visitor to Brook Farm who married Osborne Macdaniel, a Brook Farmer and contributor to the *Harbinger*, in March 1846 (Swift, *Brook Farm*, p. 152; Zoltan Haraszti, *The Idyll of Brook Farm* [Boston: Trustees of the Public Library, 1937], p. 41).

³⁹ James T. Fisher was a member and secretary of the Boston Religious Union of Associationists (see Delano, "A Calendar of the 'Boston Union,'" p. 188). Benjamin Franklin Dwight was John's younger brother.

⁴⁰ Either Elam Ives's "Music in New York" or his review of *American Musical Times* in the 6 or 13 November *Harbingers* (6:5, 15).

Your musical article is in type.⁴¹

In haste yrs ever G. R.⁴²

Flatbush, Monday Ev'g 22 Nov /47

My dear John

I hasten to thank you from my heart of hearts for your kind, good, balmy letter, which came this morning, & written no doubt, partly under the influence of your own musical, concord-loving soul, & partly from that bright, beloved one, who you tell me, is playing the 'Miss-Chief' among you, & who on the principle of Homocopathy (though in this case pray let not the doses be too small) will surely cure all 'mischief' among us.⁴³ Indeed, we have needed an angel to set us right, for it seems as if all the petty, unexpected, little imps & demons that could be produced, were hovering over the first steps of the new Harbinger, to give it a most annoying trial, on its entrance to the high, brilliant, & powerful life, to which I am sure it is destined. I should despair giving you an idea of the thousand & one little torments, which we have suffered, & the results of which in the faults of the paper, you suffer too. We have all contrived to keep good-natured, & not to let our experience of the miseries of business-life destroy "the hilarity of the occasion", but I tell you to work like dragons, badgers, & water-snakes, & to be able to show nothing but a miserable mouse is no joke. We take the caustic criticisms of all friends with the most provoking good humor; we all wish to make the Harbinger as perfect as possible; our standard. I am persuaded in the same; & that we have not done our part here better is our misfortune, or if you please, our fault; although I do not know, for myself, how I could have exerted myself more strenuously, or to greater advantage. I never worked so hard in my life, & I only wish that I could work harder, say 30 hours or so a day, & not stop to eat or sleep. I have determined to kill myself if we dont make the Harbinger the almightiest paper, that the world ever saw; & I feel now as if the getting out of every number was a battle, in which one would gladly be shot dead, & the dearest, for the sake of winning it.

As to the matter, I am well satisfied. Every man of good taste must approve it.

Well then, about the form. First, there was a mistake in measuring the paper, by which, the columns obtained an outrageously tilting look. 2d. The type was altogether too small. 3. Bad ink. 4. Horrid Press work, done in a hurry & at night.⁴⁴ This was partly occasioned by the confounded, soedologer of a foreman; partly, by the blunders of the compositors, a choir of journeymen & apprentices, as unlike our choice little group of Charley & Willard &c &c as Scotch snuff is unlike gold dust.⁴⁵

⁴¹ Dwight's "Music in Boston" in the 27 November *Harbinger* (6:29-30).

⁴² Endorsed "Geo. Ripley. — Nov. 10, 1847."

⁴³ Possibly a reference to Mary Bullard, whom Dwight met at Brook Farm and married in 1851.

⁴⁴ Others agreed with Ripley: for example, James Kay, President of the Philadelphia Union of Associationists, complained of the bad proof reading, the small-sized type, and the flimsy paper (letter to James T. Fisher, 26 November 1847, Massachusetts Historical Society).

⁴⁵ Charles H. Codman and S. Willard Saxton were members of the Printing Group at Brook Farm (Manuscript Brook Farm Records, Massachusetts Historical Society).

Now, in No 3, we made the following improvements. 1. Shorter columns & good proportions. 2. Good Foreman. 3. Excellent Type. 4. Decent Press Work[.] & 5. Better paper than the Harbinger was ever printed on before.

The paper now looks "harnd-some" as we Yankees say. It has struck the New-Yorkers dumb with amazement, to see that printing can look so well, for they, poor, benighted creatures, have no conception of the divine glories of the Art, as manifested in Water St. & Washington St. Morris, of the Home Journal,⁴⁶ which you know is a bejois,⁴⁷ told Godwin on opening the Harbinger, "Why, what a beautiful sheet! There's nothing to be compared with it in N.Y. — except the Home Journal."

No 3, however, is not up to the mark. 1. It contains some old type which gives it a dim, misty appearance. 2. The Ink is not first rate. 3. It was not worked on the best power press in N.Y. though a very good one. All these evils will be remedied in No 4, & I think the appearance cannot fail to please.

You ask what is expected of you in the way of writing &c. I answer, to do precisely what you have done, & as much more & better as you please[.] Every man is expected to give the best part of himself, & of course, I dont see how we can legislate at all about it, but to leave it, as we always have, to spontaneity, or at the utmost, to friendly suggestion. I supposed you would be the Musical Genius of the Harbinger as before, & that Ives would write about the concerts in N.Y. as the spirit moved, but of course, "where Malcolm sits, there will be the head of the Table".⁴⁸ If necessary, we might say in a note that we have a new contributor in N.Y. or if any thing not unitary by either of you should be written, a *D* or an *I* appended would settle all difficulties. You will naturally write on artistic, aesthetic, & scientific subjects, & fill up the deficiency in the character of the paper, which you justly complain of. I shall always be on the watch for topics, & of course, shall suggest with great frankness. You ought to get possession of all the new Boston Books as Editor of the Harbinger, & either review them yourself or give them to Channing. By the way, is not Willis' new volume in your line?⁴⁹ A kind, appreciating, but justly criticising Review of his whole literary position & character would be reasonable.

You will perceive the "lucidus ordo" which pervades the arrangement. 1. Poetry. 2. Original Article on Foreign Politics. 3. Original Communication. 4. Selections to the bottom of the 3d page.

Commence square on the 4th page with Editorials, gradually tapering off to Weekly Gossip, then Art Rev. & Rev. & 2 or 3 cols. advertise. to the bottom of p. 7. 1st col on 8th page left open for latest news. C. A. D. writes the foreign article

⁴⁶ George Pope Morris was editor of the New York *Home Journal*.

⁴⁷ Possibly a pun on "bourgeois."

⁴⁸ See Ralph Waldo Emerson's "The American Scholar": "Wherever Macdonald sits, there is the head of the table"; the phrase is also used by Thomas Fuller and Walter Scott (see *Nature, Addresses, and Lectures*, ed. Alfred R. Ferguson [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1971], pp. 64, 255).

⁴⁹ Nathaniel Parker Willis's *Poems of Early and After Years* (1848) was not reviewed in the *Harbinger*.

always & gets up the weekly gossip.⁵⁰ This is about all, & he works industriously & judiciously. Godwin writes the secular editorials & Theatre. James is a saint & a host, & is up to any thing. G. R. writes as usual "stop-gaps", attends to the solemnities, courtesies, &c, &c, in fact does nothing very tangible at all, at all. He keeps his eyes open however & is always on the watch. Now then, you see a wide sphere for yourself & Channing. You will complete the circle, & it will be divine, "that's a fact".

I will send you a marked paper, hereafter. Meantime, I give you a list.⁵¹

| | | | | | |
|-------|--------------|-------|-------|-----------------|-------|
| No 1. | Rogers | G. R. | No 3. | Presbyterian | G. R. |
| | Bushnell | H. J. | | Pio Nono | P. G. |
| | Introductory | P. G. | | Morals of N. Y. | do |
| | Short Pieces | G. R. | | Policy of A. | G. R. |
| | | | | Orson | do |
| No 2. | Free Trade | P. G. | | Epigram | P. G. |
| | Con. of Eng. | do | | Balance Edit. | G. R. |
| | New Movent | G. R. | | Truth stranger | |
| | Short pieces | G. R. | | than fiction | H. J. |
| | Davis & Bush | H. J. | | Jer. Belknap | G. R. |
| | | | | Prospectus | G. R. |

Now then, my dear Friend, you see what we can do. All the papers are loud in their praises. We are going ahead. The Harbinger has no [blank space] The exchanges are getting into shape.

Your suggestion about the back No's is good. Send on only an assortment at present, to enable me to supply missing nos.

I have not written to Channing yet, will you shew him this as a substitute.

Give my best love to all our saints & angels, men & women.

When you see any of our divine ones of Brook Farm, tell them not to forget me. — Keep writing. Your letters are wine, storax, frankincense &c &c &c.

G. R.

Tuesday Mo'g 12 o cl.

No boats in yet.

A confounded fog

⁵⁰ Among other articles discussing foreign news, Dana regularly contributed a column about "European Affairs."

⁵¹ The articles listed are (except for short pieces or filler material): in the 6 November issue (for Rogers and Bushnell, see notes 22 and 33): Parke Godwin's "Introductory" (6:5); 13 November: Godwin's "Free Trade, Free Soil, Free Labor, and Free Speech" (6:12) and "The Conditions of England" (6:12), Ripley's "New Movements" (6:12-13), and Henry James, Sr.'s review of "Davis's Revelations" Revealed by George Bush and B. F. Barrett (6:15); 20 November: Ripley's "Presbyterian" (6:17), Godwin's "Pope Pio Nono" (6:20) and "The Morals of New York" (6:20), Ripley's "Policy of Associationists" (6:20) and "Orson Murray and the Courts" (6:20-21), Godwin's "An Epigram" (6:21), James's "Truth Stranger Than Fiction" (6:21), and Ripley's review of *Life of Jeremy Belknap* (6:22-23). Ripley's list of contributors originally appeared in three columns.

Flatbush, Wednesday ev'g 1 Dec [1847]

My dear John

I am grieved & mortified that your piece should have been so murdered; & the worst of it is, I had not the slightest suspicion of it, till your letter came this morning.⁵² What devils got hold of the types is more than I know, & I begin to think it out of the question for any one to ensure the correctness of another's writings. I never took more pains with a proof in my life, & you must charge the whole fault to my stupidity, but not to my neglect. Your copy came too late in the day; Thursday was Thanksgiving; & the paper must be made up by Thursday night, or we should lose the mail on Friday. They hurried up your article on Wednesday & Thursday, as I was unwilling to defer it; the foreman read it by copy, on Thursday aft; & on Thursday ev'g, I came from a party in N.Y. with Sophia at 1/2 past 9 & staid in the office till nearly 11, & read over the whole of the copy aloud to the foreman, he looking on the copy. But there it is. After such infernal luck, I am ready to bite out my own eyes, which play me so false; & if we do not get your next article right, I shall give up in despair.

We have not got affairs in the office going quite straight yet; Allen is away; & this number will not look as well as the last. But Patienza! We shall have sun rise yet, & also high noon. Subscriptions come in first-rate, though as yet but few renewals of the Vol V-men.

What the dogs has become of Channing?⁵³ He must not leave us in the lurch now, & his aid & constant contributions I regard as indispensable. I hope till we get under full sail, he will give us something every week; we must have the variety, that can come only from the bountiful contributions of our whole corps.

Now for a few business items.

1. Where are the Tracts? Not one has made its appearance. This should be attended to. Please spur up Gentlemen C[rosby]. & N[ichols].
2. I am ashamed to meet the constant demands for back Nos. with the answer that they have not yet arrived from Boston. Cannot Charlie Codman who I presume goes to B[rook]. F[arm]. every Sat. night, collect say a dozen or two complete sets, & forward them by Express. If not, do for Heaven's sake, get a man or a woman, or some sort of a "critter," to go out on purpose, & pay them for it, — for the papers must be had.
3. Here is an important item, which I wish you to attend to personally. You remember Brisbane[']s green covered quarto French Dictionary, which I used in translating Fourier.⁵⁴ I left this out to be packed with other books, but

⁵² Dwight's "Music in Boston" appeared in the 27 November *Harbinger* (6:29-30).

⁵³ Channing published but two articles (one of them co-authored with Dwight and Godwin) in the last three volumes of the *Harbinger*. Godwin even wrote Dwight to inquire "what has become of the Boston editor? or does he mean to write only once in six weeks? Please stir him up" (n.d., George Willis Cooke, *John Sullivan Dwight* [Boston: Small, Maynard, 1898], p. 111).

⁵⁴ Albert Brisbane was one of the leading spokesmen for Associationism in America and an occasional contributor to the *Harbinger*.

Sophia, thinking it belonged to you, sent it down to the Hive with other books, for you.⁵⁵ B. is in a great fever to get this, & I hate to disappoint him. If you have it, will you send it to me, by the next Express. If not, will you or Charlie search for it in the "old diggings", for if it does not come soon, I fear B. will have a fit. Don't neglect this if you please. — Also, if you find 1st vol of Wordsworth or any other valuable books of mine, let them come, too.

4. Barnabas Davis's papers and all in the Boston Post-Office.⁵⁶ They were not directed to him at the U.S. Hotel, for that was not ordered, in your letters. The direction is now set right.
5. How many had we better send to C & N. We should not print many more than are disposed of.
6. I think Cotton, Ditson, & Reed, if nobody else, will advertise, if looked after. Twenty lines at \$10 a year, is very low.
7. If possible, mail every thing you wish to get in, on Monday, & it will save us a good deal of trouble. We want to go to press on Thursday Mor'g, so that you can get the papers on Friday. By deferring till near Sat. many of our subscribers dont get their papers till Monday or Tuesday & that breaks the charm.

With regard to the signatures,⁵⁷ we supposed, after what you wrote, that you would prefer having J. S. D. attached to your most important pieces, & that E[lan]. I[ves]. would also put his initials to his. Better in the old way, I still think. You differ more about Madame Bishop, I imagine, than any thing else.⁵⁸

I cannot bring myself to publish the list of errata. It does no good, & points out the errors to many who never would discover them. The intelligent reader sees them for himself & corrects them, as did Tweedy & James.⁵⁹ In this view, the more atrocious the blunder, the easier of correction.

We are looking forward with pleasure to your visit the 14th. You & Channing are depended on for a lecture before the N.Y. Union.

Dont fail to write me as fully as you can; & also fulfil your promise to Sophia.
Ever sincerely Yours G. R.

I forget to speak of Gay's Express.⁶⁰ He says he does not charge his customers any thing for taking periodicals, but never charges less than 25 cts a piece for bundles. Will C & N pay this, or do we or how is it.

Thursday Morg. No Boston mail today. A soft, mild rain, & the grass in Flatbush is green as Brook Farm Meadows in June.

⁵⁵The "Hive" was the central building at Brook Farm, containing a number of apartments and the central dining facility (Swift, *Brook Farm*, pp. 27-29).

⁵⁶Barnabus Davis worked for the merchants Scudder and Company of Boston.

⁵⁷Authorship of articles in the *Harbinger* was not assigned until the index for the volume was completed, although some contributors — including Dwight — had their articles signed with their initials (see Sterling F. Delano and Rita Colanzi, "An Index to Volume VIII of *The Harbinger*," *Resources for American Literary Study*, 10 [1980]: 175).

⁵⁸Madame Bishop's musical performances were favorably reviewed in the 18 September 1847 and 27 January 1849 *Harbingers* (5:235, 8:102).

⁵⁹Edmund Tweedy was the Treasurer of the American Union of Associationists.

⁶⁰James Gay was an express carrier on Court Street in Boston.

Flatbush, 7 Dec /47

Dear John

We this morning recd by Gay's Express a large bundle of Tracts No 2.

Will you forward by the next Express, a similar bundle of Tracts No 1, to be sold on commission, — as, if I remember right, they belong to the Boston Union.

I cannot tell you how much we want a few sets of the back numbers. Can you not send them this week?

If you have at hand a letter from Sophia containing a criticism on the Greek Slave, will you please lend it to her, for a short time. Send it by the return mail.

Tweedy wishes to balance his accounts before the meeting of the Ex. Com. & desires me particularly to request you to forward him at once a statement of your accounts, up to this time.

We have your articles by today's mail, & they are in the hands of the composers.⁶¹

It is greatly regretted by all of us that we do not hear from Channing. We need all the spiritual force that can come from our Boston Group, to keep up the tone of the Harbinger. Charles you perceive is confined to the secular department; I am a mere man of all work, & can do scarce any thing but watch details; Godwin is fruitful, genial, & altogether in earnest, but is not inexhaustible; & without a stronger infusion of the Boston element, we cannot do justice to our ideal. Do then for Heaven's sake, urge Channing to write as if he had nothing else to do, & as if the Harbinger had no other Editor. And pray, please do the same thing yourself.

I trust I do not exaggerate the importance of giving the Harbinger, a character which shall defy obstacles. Without its influence, or if it stoops from its high position, our movement will necessarily become limited, narrow, almost individual. We have now resources to give it a place in American literature, in American history, — shall I not say in the progress of Humanity,—which no publication ever enjoyed before. It is truly delightful to find the position it has gained throughout the country, from the recent notices of the press. It is spoken of without exception, in a tone of affectionate respectfulness, altogether unprecedented. Let us not only keep what we have gained, but put it out at compound interest.

The pecuniary affairs thus far are encouraging. For November in spite of the enormous extra expense of the two first Nos, the deficit was only \$37. being \$11 less than the estimate. Since the first of Dec. we have taken \$80.

Of course, you & Channing will be here at the meeting of the Ex. Com. I hope you will arrive at furthest on Monday; or can you not come & lecture on Friday evg.

Sophia has made acquaintance with some musical folks who are in ecstasies with your writings, & who are impatient to see you[.]

Yours ever

Geo. Ripley.

⁶¹ Dwight's "Letters from Boston to New York" and "New Chorus and Glee Books" appeared in the 11 December *Harbinger* (6:44, 46-47).

(Dont forget to give my love to all the saints, who remember me in their prayers — or other wise.)

Please notice in your returns, the reception of my letter, & also any business matters that I propose.

Wed. Morg. Spruce St.

I did not seal my letter last night, & can reply to yours recd this mor'g.

I supposed that C[rosby] & N[ichols]. were doing all that you suggest. Please tell them, that we expect them to look after the Boston subscribers, to obtain new subscriptions & notify us of all errors & omissions in delivery. For this they receive twenty-five per ct of all money paid to them. I will soon send on a list of delinquent subs which I shall wish them to collect.

By good rights, C & N ought to pay the Express, but I suppose we shall have to do it, until the list enlarges. The N.Y. newspaper agents as a general rule, pay the freight — not the publishers.

I will send only 30 extra copies for the future, as the Nos. are getting scarce.

The names you speak of will be attended to, — also J. T. F's Notice.⁶²

It will be the saddest of disappointments if you don't come. Could you not get a free pass of the Steam boat Agent as Editor of the Harbinger or Chronotype? Ask Wright about this.⁶³ J. Drew travels all over the country free as correspondent of the "Nineteenth Century".⁶⁴ You can sleep in my office very comfortably, & for the rest, you can live first rate for 37 1/2 cts a day. I dont feel as if we could get on at all without you.]

Tuesday Mor'g 20 June [1848].

My dear John

I should care no more for Eppesom's retort, than did the supposed Quaker whether he should swear or affirm. Your article was a jewel of the first water.⁶⁵ We all went for it, without hesitation, & particularly James, who wrote the closing lines. You were clearly in the right, in reporting the conversation, which was in no sense confidential; indeed you were bound to do it, in order to make out your case,

⁶² James T. Fisher's notice acknowledging sums received "in aid of the funds of the Union" appeared in the 11 December *Harbinger* (6:45).

⁶³ In dealing with Wright and the *Boston Chronotype*, Ripley may have been acting at Dana's suggestion, for the latter had previously served as the paper's assistant editor (see James Harrison Wilson, *The Life of Charles A. Dana* [New York: Harpers, 1907], pp. 59-60).

⁶⁴ J. Drew was a writer for the *Nineteenth Century*, a periodical which had begun publication in Philadelphia in January 1848.

⁶⁵ According to Dwight's "The Magnanimity and Honesty of the Boston Transcript," he presented that paper's editor (possibly Epes Sargent) with material to insert to counter the "misrepresentations and calumnies" he was printing about Associationism. After the editor had agreed to publish "either the whole of them, or the principal part, the substance of them," Dwight was shocked to find in print, instead, "a little quibbling, prevaricating, sullen paragraph" (7 [17 June 1847]: 52). Eppesom is unidentified.

as wronged by the non-fulfilment of his promise. Think no more about it; & you will have the public, as far as you care for it, on your side.

As to Parker's Review. I did not know that it was sent to you.⁶⁶ That was all right. When you get through it, you had better send it, with any other pamphlets or documents, under cover to C. S. Francis & Co. through Monroe & Francis, Washington St. who are frequently, perhaps daily sending bundles to C. S. F. & Co. in this city.⁶⁷

I wish you would ask C[rosby] & N[ichols]. why we do not get Howitt's Journal, nor the Peoples Journal.⁶⁸ I could make great use of them, & I wish he would mail us a copy of each, as soon as they appear. I have not seen a number, say for six months. Pray be stringent with C & N. about this, for I dare say, nothing but their carelessness is in fault.

Your frequent communications, are very acceptable I assure you. Dont let them drop, as we need all the force we can command.

Please deliver the enclosed to the fair saint our sister Anna, as soon as possible, for it requires an answer here by Thursday Morning.

Ever yours
G. R.

July 14, 1848

My dear John

We stopped "Lucy Bealer Hingham" her paper, on account of non-payment for over a year[.] Shall I resume sending it & forward her a bill? She has not been in Boston, I take it.

As to the "Democratie Pacifique" your best way would be to write for it directly to Paris, & if you cannot arrange with Fisher or Charles to pay for it there, they might charge it to the Harbinger a/c, & you settle with us. Our copy is very irregular & always late, for what reason, I cant imagine, as you always appear to get yours in Boston at the proper time. Thank you for the translations.⁶⁹ They are quite seasonable just now. Godwin has written nothing at all for Nos 10 & 14 — new paternal cares & joys having detained him out of town with his family, which on the 4th of July received an accession of the first boy. I hope it will not turn out the old boy, like its father.⁷⁰

⁶⁶ The first number of Theodore Parker's *Massachusetts Quarterly Review* was published in December 1847.

⁶⁷ Edmund Munroe and David Francis were partners in a printing firm on Devonshire Street in Boston.

⁶⁸ *Howitt's Journal of Literature and Popular Progress* (January 1847–June 1848) and the *People's Journal* (January 1846–June 1849) were English reform periodicals.

⁶⁹ The *Démocratie pacifique* was described in the 15 July *Harbinger* as containing "more reliable information, as well as sounder, clearer and more hopeful views, than any other newspaper in France" (7:84). Dwight's translations are probably "The French Revolution as we view it, or Samples of the 'Démocratie pacifique'" in the 15 and 21 July *Harbingers* (7:84, 93).

⁷⁰ There is no reference to this incident in any biography of Godwin.

We had no quorum at either meeting of the Ex. Comm. & of course could do nothing but talk. Several Reports were put in train for the Sept. meeting but nothing really accomplished.

You were startled of course by the news from France, but not made to lose your presence of mind, I hope. I like the view given by Wright, in Thursday's Chron. & this mornings Tribune contains quite a clear & satisfactory statement by Charles, of the social causes of the conflict.⁷¹ Our ground is plain enough, I think, & will not be compromised by the atrocious lies of the Herald & Express — to which I suppose little Eppesom will play second fiddle. The emeriti stirred up the filthiest rabble of Paris, no doubt, folks who can serve for nothing but as food for powder; but the better class of workmen were sorely tempted by the apathy of the monied interest in the Assembly, & saw in its neglect, the betrayal of their hopes. The whole affair shows what *the* question of the day is; the misery of the masses is felt to have reached its climax; & poor Fourierism which points out the cure must be reproached as the cause.

Will you ask C[rosby] & N[ichols] to send me the Rev. A. N. D. S. O. F. O. R. T. H. Discourse at *leaving* Purchase St. not the Dedication Sermon.⁷²

Ever yours G. R.

I send a letter to J. Butterfield, which I would thank you to see does not lie a month in C & N's store.⁷³

New York, Aug 28, 1848

My dear Sir

I take the liberty to address you as a leading friend of the Associative movement in this country, & to lay before you a brief statement of the present condition, purposes & needs of the American Union of Associationists.

At the last annual meeting of the Union in May,⁷⁴ it was estimated that the expenses of supporting a Central Office in N. York, & of publishing the Harbinger would amount in round numbers to the sum of \$80.00 per week, or a little over \$4000. a year, as follows

⁷¹ There was much reporting and discussion in the New York press about the revolution going on in France at this time, with the conservative papers, the *Herald* and *Express*, blaming the disorders on the followers of Charles Fourier, the patron saint of the Associationists. The *Herald*, for example, concluded that "there is little doubt that Fourierism and monarchical intrigue were the causes of this lamentable affair" ("Fourierism in France," 14 July 1847, p. 3). Greeley's *New-York Tribune*, which supported the *Harbinger*, regularly published Charles Dana's letters written from France describing the conflict and rebuked the *Express* in "Fourierism in Paris," 14 July 1848, p. 2.

⁷² A reference to Ripley's *A Farewell Discourse Delivered to the Congregational Church in Purchase Street, March 28, 1841* (Boston: Freeman and Bolles, 1841).

⁷³ Jonathan Butterfield was a Brook Farmer who had worked as a printer on the *Harbinger* (Manuscript Brook Farm Records, Massachusetts Historical Society).

⁷⁴ For the financial report of this meeting, see *Harbinger*, 7 (27 May 1848): 30.

| | |
|---|------------------|
| Printing, folding, & mailing the Harbinger. | \$44.00 per week |
| Salary of Gen. Secretary, & of three other Editors, Godwin, Dwight, & Dana | 30.00 |
| Rent & care of Office, Stationary, Postage &c | 4.00 |
| Sundries & Contingencies | 2.00 |
| | <u>\$80.00</u> |

To meet these expenses, the Ex. Committee rely on the following sources of income, namely,

| | |
|---|----------------|
| Average Receipts of the Harbinger | 36.00 |
| Private Subscriptions (3 Subscribers \$4.00 ea) | 12.00 |
| 6 do 1.00 ea | 6.00 |
| Amount Brot up | 54.00 |
| 6 Unions in | |
| New-York | |
| Boston | |
| Philadelphia | |
| Cincinnati | 24.00 |
| Providence | |
| Albany | |
| Other Unions | 2.00 |
| | <u>\$80.00</u> |

You will thus perceive that a large proportion of the above amount is paid by a few earnest & devoted friends of the cause, & that for the remainder we look to the promptness & punctuality of the Affiliated Unions.

You will also perceive that according to the above estimate no provision is made for the support of Lectures or the publication of Tracts, both of which objects are deemed by the Committee of great importance to the success of the cause.

It is now earnestly wished by the Executive Committee that the friends of the movement throughout the country would come forward in the spirit of zeal & self-sacrifice which its great humanitarian character is suited to inspire, & guarantee the amount of pecuniary aid which is essential to its permanent & victorious progress. They hope to receive such a response from their friends as will enable them not only to carry out the plans based upon the foregoing estimate, without disappointment; but to establish a system of Lecturing & Publication, that shall be adequate to the demands of the times & to the magnitude of the Truth, which is committed to Associationists as a sacred trust.

In particular, they wish to procure the means by which Mr William H. Channing, accompanied by the General Secretary, may proceed to Cincinnati the ensuing autumn, & with that city for a centre, give courses of Lectures, in such places, as may be deemed desirable & expedient, after a survey of the whole ground.⁷⁵

⁷⁵ Although Channing had earlier served as a minister in Cincinnati, this return trip never materialized.

Knowing that you are equally interested with ourselves in the subject of this letter, I would solicit of you the favor to present it to the Affiliated Union, with which you are connected, & to such individuals of your acquaintance, as you may think proper.

I need say nothing to urge upon your attention the claims of the Associative movement on all who are hopefully waiting for the temporal redemption & elevation of Humanity, & trusting that we shall receive an answer, at your earliest convenience,

I am respectfully & sincerely
Your friend
Geo. Ripley
Corr. Sec'y. A.U.A.

An answer by Sept. 20th will be very acceptable.

New York, 18 Oct 1848

My dear John

I wish to give you the earliest notice, that the "brethren" here are getting a good deal discouraged, & that it will be impossible to go on with our present operations, unless we should obtain an unlooked for accession of strength.

The whole receipts for the *Harbinger* fall short of \$15 00 for the year, & for the last two or three months, have been much less than that proportion. Mr. Tweedy has advanced some \$2 or 300 from his own pocket, & does not feel willing to continue this beyond the present month. We have now really no funds at command to meet the current expenses, & it is hard to say what we shall do to avoid shutting up shop. We may partially meet the difficulty,

1. By reducing the size of the paper.
2. By turning it into a monthly.
3. By appealing to our friends to sustain the present form, or
4. By connecting it with a system of guaranty propagation.⁷⁶

Tweedy is for No. 1. Godwin goes strong for No. 2. Besides, he never has shown any vital, paramount interest in the *Harbinger*, & does not love it well enough to write for it, without a "consideration". They all have the feeling that the direct Associative movement is & will be for some time such an uphill work in this country, that it will scarce pay its way.

Tweedy has gone to Phil. to consult Mr. Kay.⁷⁷ I am not without hope that his clear, cabalistic brain may suggest something, but I still have great fears.

For myself, I cling to the present arrangements, not only from my personal feelings which are strongly enlisted in their support, but from the deepest conviction that they cannot be greatly changed, without risking the existence of our whole organization. I would therefore advocate the most strenuous efforts to induce our

⁷⁶ Ripley's meaning is unclear. Presumably he means that the *Harbinger* would be published only when enough money was on hand to cover the costs.

⁷⁷ Kay, an occasional visitor to Brook Farm and a long-time supporter of the community, was often consulted for advice by Ripley and others (see Clarence Gohdes, "Three Letters by James Kay Dealing with Brook Farm," *Philological Quarterly*, 17 [1938]: 377-388).

friends to keep their shoulder to the wheel, until we can put into effect, a plan like Mr Orvis's for a guaranty propagation.⁷⁸ What are Orvis's views now & what is he doing.

You had better see Channing at once, & the leading friends, & see what can be done in Boston, although any needless publicity in the matter, would be apt to prove a damage. We must hang together, if the Lord has not otherwise ordained, but, there is little life to grow from except in Boston. Our leading friends here have little courage, little faith, little enterprise, & need perpetual inspirations of life from a higher source.

I write in haste but believe that I have told you the whole story. Let us hear soon[.]

Yours Ever G R.

Harbinger Office, Thursday P.M. [December 1848]

My dear John

I have written you so many letters spiritually, in reply to your various missives, that you have been defrauded of all in black & white. Do not fear that I have lost pen or tongue, heart or hope, that I have joined the brothers of La Trappe,⁷⁹ or lean to Catholicism in any form, but that of Universal Unity — Universal Salvation for soul & body, for Time & Eternity. The truth is, I have had so little of an agreeable nature to speak of, that I have rather shrunk from communication with any one, & have yielded to the stream of business drudgery, relieved with the earnest discussions of our little circle, till I find that day after day has elapsed, leaving many duties far less pleasant than writing to you unperformed. — The prospects of the Harbinger are not essentially improved. We have taken a good deal of money this month, nearly \$200, but most of it for renewals, with scarce a new subscriber. The Affiliated Unions out of the cities are not to be relied on, & with that, there is little hope that Cincinnati will meet her engagement. Still, the friends (Kay, Tweedy, James &c) say, we had better make no change in the form of the paper till May, — we can't alter the size without breaking up our engagement with Allen, & being obliged to incur the expense of a new outfit.⁸⁰ So nothing can be saved in that way. The amount of it is, the few friends who have hitherto done so much are willing to keep the ball in motion till Spring at all hazards. In a long & very good letter to Tweedy, Mr Kay suggested that the Editors should relinquish 20 per cent of their present salaries from Nov 1, & this suggestion, I for my part, very cheerfully accept, — having long felt that I was receiving more for my services,

⁷⁸ John Orvis, one of Brook Farm's most successful and widely traveled lecturers in support of Fourierism, had married John Dwight's sister Marianne in December 1846 (see Swift, *Brook Farm*, pp. 175–181).

⁷⁹ The Trappist monks were noted for their austerity, silence, and general asceticism.

⁸⁰ The *Harbinger* for 3 February announced "To Our Readers" that "we contemplate a change of form in the *Harbinger* very shortly" (8:107). The next week's issue was the last one published.

than could be justified in the present embarrassment of the treasury. I am very anxious to keep up the paper in its present form, & with the present Editors. I do not see how we can spare a single element. I should like to devote more time to strictly editorial labors, but there is a great deal of drudgery to be done, which if not done by me, would be neglected, & things would fall into confusion. If worst comes to worst, I don't know but the plan proposed by you in your note today is the best one,—or, at any rate cut down the paper to its original dimensions, & pay us as little as possible for editing. — The whole movement is becoming more & more ambiguous. The theoretical, speculative, uncertain element has got too far ahead of the practical. I rejoice in your Club-House.⁸¹ Heaven prosper it.

I must close now or I shall lose the chance of the bundle[.]

Yrs evr G. R.⁸²

In its 10 February 1849 issue, the *Harbinger* announced that the “management” had determined to “change the form of its publication” to either “a monthly Magazine” of “from 80 to 100 pages” or “a weekly newspaper of smaller dimensions,” and that the first number of “the new form would appear in a few days.”⁸³ But the 10 February number was the last *Harbinger* published.⁸⁴

Ripley was devastated. Although he would soon start working for Horace Greeley's *New-York Tribune*, and he would never surrender those principles which had sustained him through the Brook Farm experiment, he now wrote to Dwight of the Associationists: “We can do nothing together again . . . & it is only spilt milk to try.” And,

⁸¹ Dwight had joined with some other former Brook Farmers in the fall of 1848 in renting rooms at 59 High Street in Boston. They also subleased some of the rooms to organizations such as the Boston Religious Union of Associationists. Because the first meeting of the Boston Union at High Street was on 26 November 1848, Ripley's letter in response to Dwight's must have been written soon after (see Cooke, *Dwight*, pp. 129-130; Delano, “A Calendar of the ‘Boston Union,’” p. 238).

⁸² Endorsed “Dec. 1848.” The lack of letters during the early part of 1849 was due to a painful injury to Ripley's arm, which left it “entirely useless and motionless” (Ripley to Parke Godwin, 1 February 1848 [i.e., 1849], New York Public Library).

⁸³ “An Announcement,” 8:116.

⁸⁴ Ghosts of the *Harbinger* appeared twice soon after its collapse. The 30 June 1849 *Univervoetum and Spiritual Philosopher* announced it would amalgamate with the *Harbinger* as a new publication, the *Spirit of the Age* (4:75). This latter paper, edited by William Henry Channing, began publication on 7 July 1849 and continued until 27 April 1850. On 23 August 1849, the Boston *Daily Chronotype* gave “some friends of social reform” three columns on its front page, but this attempt lasted only a few months (see Cooke, *Dwight*, pp. 135-139).

looking back, he concluded: "if I had devoted my time to writing for the *Harbinger*, in my own private room, where thought & pen could run freely & in unison, instead of frittering away time & strength, & in fact, destroying my Herculean health, in the mechanical details of the office, it would have been no worse for the paper, & greatly better for myself."⁸⁵

⁸⁵ 10 April 1849, in Edith Roelker Curtis, *A Season in Utopia: The Story of Brook Farm* (New York: Thomas Nelson, 1961), pp. 323-324.

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