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The Seafarer as the “Worthy Poor”

Steven Park

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International Association for the Study of Maritime Mission

Marine societies were some of the first voluntary associations in colonial America. While fellowship and social connectedness were certainly functions of these pre-Revolution societies, their primary goal was business-related: they served as a form of financial protection for their members. After the War of 1812, during the early years of what we now call the “Second

Great Awakening,” a new kind of marine society began to appear in the cities of the Northeast. The function of these societies was not financial, but rather spiritual. They reached out to those who were considered the “deserving” or “worthy” poor. Up until this century, with the rise of “scientific” social work, it was not unusual for those in charitable work to make a distinction between those who were “lazy, shiftless, or idle,” and the working poor who had fallen on hard times or had difficulty making ends meet.

Early Marine Societies

The Marine Society in New York was founded in 1769 by thirty-two people who banded together for the charitable purpose of “the relief of distressed shipmasters or their widows and children, and also for the promotion of maritime knowledge.”¹ The society petitioned for the erection of lighthouses and buoys, and is perhaps best remembered for its work with establishing Sailor’s Snug Harbor. While the goals of this and similar societies were charitable, they were also self-serving: the elites of the maritime trades were merely taking care of their own. Although the dues seemed modest (\$2.00 per

¹*The Marine Society of the City of New York, in the State of New York*, 1933, 5.

year), some could not afford this amount and were warned that under the constitution of the society, they would not receive benefits.

Many pre-Revolution marine societies were decidedly secular in their approach; many boasted that they instituted no religious test for membership. In fact, one of the most divisive issues ever to face the Board of Directors of the Salem Marine Society was the use of money they received from an estate, money which had been earmarked for the construction of a Seamen's Bethel. This was hotly debated by the members of the society, with some strongly opposed to its construction. After

the Bethel was dedicated in July of 1890, most sailors did not even attend its services and it had to be turned over to the YMCA².

The voluntary associations that emerged from the revivals of the Second Great Awakening to evangelize seamen differed sharply from the marine societies that preceded them. They were unapologetically evangelical and intentionally non-denominational. While the secular marine societies served a very tangible economic function for their elite members, evangelical societies repeatedly tried to convince merchants that

²Philip C.F. Smith, "The Salem Marine Society, 1766-1966," *The American Neptune* (1966): 278.

their businesses would benefit if they helped improve the morals of the working-class sailors. Hugh Davis, in an article on the American Seamen's Friend Society (ASFS), described the organizations that preceded the ASFS (pre-1825) as "marginal in terms of their public support and scope of operations."³

The early efforts to reach the American seaman with the Christian gospel were made by those who moved not in the elite circles of the marine societies, but among the poor. A gentleman from England who became a life member of a marine society with a \$50 donation noted that in his country the

³Hugh H. Davis, "The American Seamen's Friend Society and the American Sailor 1828-1838," *The American*

“middling class of society” kept the seamen’s movement out of debt because so few of the wealthy did anything to benefit mariners.⁴ A new urban middle class was beginning to take shape in America, as the early signs of industrialization appeared on the horizon. But even as the boards of the various Marine Bible Societies struggled to turn the movement over to the seamen themselves, financial difficulties remained because “poor Jack” did not hold on to his earnings for long. This was one of the social problems the evangelical front was trying to

Neptune (1979): 46.

⁴*The Christian Herald and Seaman’s Magazine*, vol. X, no 1,

address by institutionalizing the enthusiasm of the revivals of the 1820s and 1830s into voluntary associations.

In the early 1820s, the Marine Society of the City and State of New York was able to distribute more than \$2,000 per year to the widows and fatherless children of its deceased members. These monies had been earned as interest income from the society's principal fund. While this society prospered, another marine society in that same city, the Society for Promoting the Gospel among Seamen in the Port of New York,

could not meet its annual expenses of approximately \$2,000.⁵

The latter organization was left deeply in debt from the expenses incurred from building the Mariner's Church, and they could not

afford to retain a "settled preacher." In their Annual Report in

1821, the board claimed that "the Society has become

embarrassed by a heavy debt."⁶ The society owed \$7,000 and

could not boast that it retained even a dozen annual subscribers.

The board had to borrow money to pay the interest on the debt

for the construction of the Mariner's Church, and the collections

⁵See the report of the Fifty-third Annual Meeting of the Marine Society of the City and State of New York, 18 January 1823 reprinted in *The Christian Herald and Seaman's Magazine* vol. IX no. XIX p. 604. They were able to sustain a dividend of approximately \$2,400 throughout the decade. See a small book titled *The Marine Society of the City of New York, in the State of New York*, published by the same in 1933, p. 11.

⁶*The Christian Herald and Seaman's Magazine*, vol. VIII, no V, 21 July 1821 page misnumbered, should read 156, not 146

at the church were not sufficient to cover even normal operating expenses. The solution of the Board of Directors was to hire a permanent minister (with money that they did not have) and send him to the principal seaports of New England, founding more societies and taking up a collection for the seaman's cause in New York.⁷

This new debt-ridden society marked a break with the older marine societies that had been founded before the American Revolution. The older marine societies served a function similar to a life insurance policy or workers' compensation. Members

⁷Ibid. Vol. VIII, no. XVII, 544.

(mostly shipmasters, although merchants were admitted as honorary members) paid yearly dues to the society in exchange for a pledge that their widows and fatherless children would be cared for in the event of their death. Since the primary function of the older societies was to provide financial stability to the families of shipmasters, the kind of debt carried by the Society for Promoting the Gospel among Seamen would have been considered unacceptable in colonial times, and the society would have been quickly discredited. But in the newer organizations, the goal was to help the poor, especially New York's deserving merchant seamen. Thus, a debt was considered an acceptable

risk to get a movement started. But without an advocate in the printed media, this debt could have crushed the fledgling movement.

***The Christian Herald* and the “worthy” poor**

The seaman’s cause in the United States found a published voice in *The Christian Herald*. Its purpose, as stated in the first issue in 1816, was to fulfill the “...increasing desire...throughout this country, to obtain information concerning the progress of Christianity.” The editor was trying to offer an alternative to the unedifying material that abounded in his day and to “...enkindle zeal...promoting the interests of that kingdom which endureth

for ever [sic].”⁸ The *Herald* published many different types of news that celebrated the progress of Christianity. Some articles would rebuke believers for their lack of effort or faith.

Frequently, articles were reprinted from other publications, both secular and religious. The paper was unswerving in its orthodox evangelicalism and printed a lengthy apology in response to a letter from a reader who was concerned about an article reprinted from *Unitarian Miscellany*.⁹

The *Herald*'s format was somewhat predictable.

Frequently it began with a brief article on Christianity and its

⁸*The Christian Herald*, Vol. I, No. I, 3.

progress and benefits. That would be followed by an anecdote, usually a surprising or unlikely conversion story. The obituary section often reflected on the conversion and life of a wealthy patron who had shown unusual generosity to the poor. The “Foreign Intelligence” section included reports from missionary societies around the world. Annual reports of tract societies, Bible societies, female societies, and domestic benevolent groups frequently reported revivals.

Like the non-denominational Mariner’s Church, *The Christian Herald* claimed that “this work is devoted to the

⁹*The Christian Herald and Seaman’s Magazine*, 5 January 1822, Vol. VIII, No. XVI, 511.

common cause of Christianity, and will not be the advocate of the *peculiar* tenets of any sect or party.”¹⁰ It was committed to the “catholic [universal] principles of Christianity and religious *intelligence*” (italics original).¹¹ The first four volumes of the *Herald* were published weekly (each Saturday, even on Christmas day!). Volume five began semi-monthly publication, but each issue increased from 16 to 32 pages, thereby avoiding any reduction in copy.

The Christian Herald began publication in 1816, as the U.S. economy started its post-war recovery. It reported the early

¹⁰Ibid. 3 January 1824, Vol. XI, No. I see the “Terms” of the publication of the magazine

signs of the Second Great Awakening in towns and on college campuses throughout the Northeast.¹² Many of the articles dealt with efforts to reach those portions of the population that had been traditionally left out of the evangelical mainstream. The early issues emphasized the successes of the Sunday School movements in reaching the children of the “poorer classes.” The *Herald* reported on the formation of the Sunday School Association in Elizabeth-town, New Jersey. In November 1815 a Sabbath School for people of color was founded, in which 86 students of both sexes were learning to read the Bible. In

¹¹Ibid. See the index to Vol. IV on page 415

January of 1816, a similar school was started for white female children. Associations of this kind were springing up around the country and receiving liberal patronage from the wealthy, the influential, and the benevolent.¹³

In the first issue of the *Herald*, an article on Sunday Schools in Great Britain praised the “benign effects upon the lower orders of society.” Their focus was “teaching the illiterate poor to read the Bible.” The illiterate poor were considered a “formerly much neglected portion of the community.” This phrase was used often to refer to mariners in the United States

¹²The Christian *Herald*, Vol. I, No. 19, 3 August 1816, 312.

and the United Kingdom. Robert Raikes reported in a letter that the distribution of Bibles as rewards to the deserving poor was turning the children around in London neighborhoods in a way that no reform in Parliament could.¹⁴ A Committee before the House of Commons testified to the benefits of Sunday School in checking vagrancy, disorder, begging, and rioting. Sunday School promoted patriotism, virtue, cleanliness, and industry. Testimonies told of remarkable changes brought about in formerly noisy and dirty neighborhoods in only a few months

¹³Ibid. Vol. I, No. 8, 18 May 1816, 127.

¹⁴Ibid. Vol. I, No. I, 5.

after the start of a Sunday School for children.¹⁵ While a Marxist interpretation of these testimonies might see a conspiracy among the elites to keep the poor in their place and doing the undesirable jobs of an emerging capitalist system, contemporaries saw themselves as educating and civilizing these young “scholars” so that they could improve themselves and their lot. The early motives and reactions of the Sunday School movements and the seamen’s missions reflect the ways in which seamen and poor children were viewed in a similar light on both sides of the Atlantic.

¹⁵Ibid. Vol. I, No. 4, 20 April 1816, 61.

Perhaps the first reference to a mariner in *The Christian Herald* was Paul Cuffee's famous voyage to Sierra Leone, taking slaves from Spanish ships to that free British colony.¹⁶

Although the *Herald* seemed like a likely candidate to take up the seaman's cause, no other reference was made to any work being done among sailors on either side of the Atlantic for more than two years. Then in the fall of 1818 an article appeared entitled "The Blind Sailor," which told the story of a retired blind mariner who stood up and gave his testimony to second the motion to found a Marine Bible Society in Liverpool that

¹⁶Ibid. Vol. I, No. 14, 29 June 1816, 219.

previous March. The next page reported a “Revival of Religion at Sea” from the *Newburyport Herald*. On board the ship *Independence* off Calcutta the previous April, there has been descriptions of “the outcasts of all nations falling down at the feet of the cross.”¹⁷ Although the New York Marine Bible Society was formed in 1816, and the Port of New York Society for Promoting the Gospel among Seamen was organized two years later, no mention of any work being done on behalf of seamen in New York was mentioned in the *Herald* until 1819,

¹⁷Ibid. Vol. V, No. 13, 3 October 1818, 413.

when the Port of New York Society was trying to collect funds to build a land-based house of worship for seamen.¹⁸

Two years before the addition of *The Seaman's Magazine* to *The Christian Herald*, articles appeared frequently to report the progress on the construction of the Mariners' Church and the urgent need for funds. Seamen represented one of many "neglected" groups that were featured in the *Herald*. The first report of the Port of New York Society printed in the *Herald* explained their purpose as stated in the second article of their constitution: "To supply seamen with the means of intellectual

¹⁸Ibid. Vol. VI, No. III, 15 May 1819, 96.

and religious instruction.”¹⁹ A temporary place of worship had been secured on Cherry-Street in December of 1818 that could accommodate several hundred seamen. Reverend Ward Stafford, the church’s first paid minister, was preaching there regularly on the Sabbath and at other times. The number of seamen attending these services surpassed even the most optimistic hopes of the Society, and on Sunday evenings some people had been turned away due to lack of space. One hundred families of seamen had indicated a desire to join the church only one year after the founding of the society. Already by this time,

¹⁹Ibid. 121.

600 Bibles and 5000 religious tracts had been distributed.

Shipmasters and owners noted a great reduction in absenteeism and improvement in morals. Encouraged by this enthusiasm, the society located a piece of real estate on Roosevelt Street but claimed that the \$5,000 they had raised so far for a Mariners' Church would not even pay for the land to build it on. By October of that year, however, they were holding ceremonies celebrating the laying of the foundation for the first church of its kind in the world, even though they had to borrow the necessary

funds.²⁰ The Mariners' Church opened on 4 June 1820 with a seating capacity of 1000 persons.

Other developments in seamen's missions were also reported in *The Christian Herald* before the addition of *The Seaman's Magazine* in May of 1821. Much of the maritime information followed the narrative of events in England (mostly London) and New York. The first reports of efforts made on behalf of seamen outside of these two great ports was a "Summary of the Third Annual Report of the Boston Society, for the moral and Religious Instruction of the Poor." Indeed, the

²⁰Ibid. Vol. VI, No. XIII, 16 October 1819, 416.

first efforts made on behalf of seamen in the United States were

not in New York, but rather in Boston in 1812, just before the

beginning of the hostilities. In that same issue of the *Herald* it

was reported that a Mariners' Church was starting in

Philadelphia, that ship-masters had started a "seamen's meeting"

in Charleston, South Carolina, and that the seamen's meeting in

Boston was enjoying 300-400 regular attendees in season. The

three specific objectives of the Boston Society were as follows:

first, to support Sabbath Schools; second, to maintain public

worship for seamen; and third, the moral and religious

improvement of West Boston. Ward Stafford first worked with

the poor before focusing specifically on seamen; it seemed that working with the poor, Sunday Schools, and missions to seamen were viewed as related ministries..²¹

Rev. Ward Stafford had not been a mariner as had Rev. George C. Smith, the great advocate of the seaman's cause in the United Kingdom. Smith was initially surprised to hear of the work being done in New York City. But the idea for a seaman's magazine can be traced to Smith. At a meeting of the Bethel Seamen's Union, British and Foreign, on 12 November 1819, Smith stated that the publication of a sailors' magazine was one

²¹Ibid. Vol. VI, No. XIX, 12 February 1820, 603.

of the four main objectives of the society.²² One year later,

Ward Stafford sent letters that he had received from two of the

secretaries of the Bethel Seamen's Union to the editor of *The*

Christian Herald with permission for them to appear in print

(which they did four days later, taking up almost five pages of

the *Herald*). The letters urged Stafford to use some of the same

methods that had proved effective in England. The secretaries

recommended meeting on board ship, in the sailors' element.

They suggested the provision of alternatives to boarding houses

and the formation of auxiliaries in different seaport towns. They

²²Ibid. Vol. VI, No. XX, 19 February 1820, 631.

later sent on a Bethel flag that could be replicated. Stafford also forwarded the first seven issues of the “Sailor’s Magazine and Naval Miscellany” to the editor. The editor not only read the issues, but published many of the articles over the next few months. Stafford proposed to the *Herald* that “a portion of each number of your very useful publication might not be profitably devoted to the interests of our seafaring brethren.”²³

Only four months later, in February of 1821, the editor of the *Herald* received two letters from Rev. George Smith that were printed in an April issue. Smith said that he had received a

²³Ibid. Vol. VII, No. XIII, 4 November 1820, 401.

collection of the periodicals from a friend (a mariner who had visited New York) and was very impressed by them and the work that was being done in New York. He went on to give some of his own testimony: how he started out as a cabin boy, and stating the importance of the work being done among sailors. One month later, another letter from Smith would open the first issue of *The Christian Herald and Seaman's Magazine*.

When it was announced on 2 April 1821 that *The Christian Herald* would be adding *The Seaman's Magazine*, it was explained that the *Herald* would continue to be “executed in a manner not inferior to the best London periodical publications,”

printed “on fine paper and a handsome type, and stitched in a

coloured cover...”²⁴ The editor gave a one-paragraph

explanation for the addition of *The Seaman’s Magazine* and

assured the readers that there would be no reduction in the

amount of other material or an increase in price. He stated that

he knew of no work that the Lord was doing that was more

astonishing than that on behalf of seamen. “It is not designed

that *The Seaman’s Magazine* should encroach upon *The*

Christian Herald...We are persuaded that *The Christian Herald*

cannot aim at any one single object more noble than the

²⁴*The Christian Herald and Seaman’s Magazine*, 2 April 1821, Vol. VII, No. XXIV, 768.

reformation and Christian benefit of seamen, were it only to bless those hitherto neglected thousands...”²⁵ The Seaman’s Magazine was published under the patronage of the Port of New York Society for Promoting the Gospel Among Seamen. While most secondary sources claim that *The Seaman’s Magazine* comprised the last eight pages of each issue of the *Herald*, a closer examination revealed some variety. The first issue contained four pages while the second had eight with an apology for devoting more pages than was intended. The third issue appeared with six pages (perhaps indicating some kind of

²⁵Ibid. See the introduction to Vol. 8. 3,4.

compromise?). Later that year some issues ran up to ten pages, and by 1823 several issues of *The Seaman's Magazine* had reached 12 pages.

George Smith's February letter that was reprinted in the first issue of *The Christian Herald and Seaman's Magazine* in May explained that, in Smith's recommendation, the Americans should have their own sailors' magazine. Smith was optimistic that Sunday Schools and the progress of education "will render them [mariners] generally a reading class of people."²⁶

Throughout the summer months of 1822 *The Seaman's*

²⁶Ibid. Vol. VIII, No. I, 19 May 1821, 30.

Magazine repeatedly defended the idea that the seamen could improve themselves with God's help.

In an address to the merchants of the City of New York, Rev. John Truair, the corresponding secretary of the New York Marine Bible Society, explained that “seamen are as capable of improvement, rational and moral, as are other men...”²⁷ The merchants of the city would be repaid for their donations in an earthly and a spiritual sense. Not only would their rewards be in heaven, but they would have a “careful and honest heart” watching over their property. Lack of care brought losses

²⁷Ibid. Vol. IX, No. I, 18 May 1822, 27.

through maritime accidents, and lack of honesty fueled cargo theft. Truair was a shrewd speaker, knowing that care and honesty were the characteristics that merchants looked for in cargo handlers.

The character of seamen interested not only those merchants whose goods were carried in coastal and international trade, but also missionaries who worked in port cities. Seamen from “Christian lands” often behaved reprehensibly, creating difficulties for Western missionaries in heathen countries. Some ports had to hire extra police on Sunday, what should have been a “holy day” for Christians, but which was spent instead in

brawling and in riotous behavior. A sermon given on board an American ship in one of those ports noted that some people thought that sailors were “an inferior tribe of human animals” that needed a hard flogging. The minister then entered into the “nature vs. nurture” fray by explaining that others thought that sailors behaved the way they did because of their circumstances.²⁸ Some anecdotal stories were offered in the *Herald*, telling of conversions of seamen and sometimes entire crews as missionaries witnessed to them on their way to distant lands. One article, “The Character of Seamen, an Obstacle to

²⁸Ibid. Vol. XI, No. XX, October 1824, 600.

Missions” was written by a missionary in the Sandwich Islands, pointing out the problem of heathens observing the behavior of whalers on leave in Honolulu.²⁹ Perhaps the missionaries should have also explained that not all visitors from “Christian lands” professed Christianity.

In the summer of 1822, in the Second Annual Report of the Society for Promoting the Gospel among Seamen in the Port of New York, Jonathan Little, then president of the society, explained that seamen were such a transient population that it was difficult to measure the results of the society’s work. In any

²⁹Ibid. Vol. IX, No. IV, 6 July 1822, 124.

Christian work, changes took place in people's hearts, changes that were not always visible on the surface (However, it was frequently the surface and behavior changes that wealthy donors desired.). Little's report offered anecdotal evidence from observers who noted an improved character among many seamen. They were pleased to report a decrease in profanity, establishment of prayer meetings, and increased attendance at the Mariners' Church.³⁰

Although signs were good for the seaman's cause in New York, the Marine Bible Society showed some frustration in

³⁰Ibid. Vol. IX, No. III, 15 June 1822.

trying to get the sailors to take more ownership of the movement. After five years of work in the city, the Board was hoping that more Bible distribution would take place from sailor to sailor. The Marine Bible Society was to be made up of seamen, not sustained merely for seamen.³¹

The “Journal of the Bethel Flag” in *The Seaman’s Magazine* reported in 1821 that the society was pleased that many prayer meetings on board ships had not only been allowed, but were actually solicited. In addition, masters, mates, and even the seamen themselves frequently led the exercises. In

³¹Ibid. Vol. III, No. II, 2 June 1821.

spite of this encouraging news, it was still necessary to send out a paid minister, Rev. John Truair, and have him absent from the pulpit of the Mariners' Church in order to promote the seaman's cause. Stafford had made a similar trip two years earlier in 1820, forming Marine Bible Societies as auxiliary chapters to the American Bible Society.³² In 1822 Truair traveled 1,420 miles in five New England states, delivering 61 sermons and 30 addresses, and collecting \$681.00³³ The following year he

³²Ibid. Vol. VII, No. X, 16 September 1820, 318.

³³Ibid. Vol. IX, No. VI, 3 August 1822.

traveled to the interior of New York State as the Erie Canal was reaching its completion.³⁴

The Directors of the Port of New York Society were not troubled by Truair's temporary absence. They actually preferred not having the same minister in the pulpit week after week.

When neither of the regular ministers could preach, the

Directors were glad to have someone from another

denominational background fill in. The seaman's cause in New

York, as in the United Kingdom, was careful to avoid any

sectarian affiliation. The Bibles were always distributed

³⁴Ibid. Vol. X, No. V, July 1823.

“without note or comment.” The Directors made certain that the six great denominations of Christians in New York were represented in ceremonies and at the pulpit. They desired a Christian community that was no longer motivated by sect or party. In the UK it was said that afloat they were united--on shore they would worship where they pleased.³⁵

This non-sectarian idea may have been a reflection of the larger political landscape in the United States in the 1820s. The end of the war in 1815 brought an end to the Federalist party as a national force in politics. During the early 1820s, the political

³⁵Ibid. Vol. VIII, No. XVI, 5 January 1822, 503.

culture of the country was going through what some historians have termed “the Era of Good Feelings.” It was thought by some of the framers of the U.S. Constitution that its ratification would negate the need for political parties. The 1820s was the period between the first party system (which collapsed in 1815) and the rise of the second party system in 1828, with the election of Andrew Jackson. Americans were looking for a system of government that would operate above the level of factional fighting and party politicking. It is not surprising, then, that *The Christian Herald and Seaman’s Magazine* asserted the need for

Christians to look beyond their own sectarian differences to the larger cause of Christ.

The Christian Herald and Seaman's Magazine was instrumental in the beginnings of seamen's missions in the United States. In his little booklet *The Seaman's Cause*, Israel P. Warren, secretary of the American Seamen's Friend Society, acknowledged *The Christian Herald* and its role leading up to the publication of *The Mariner's Magazine* and ultimately *The Sailor's Magazine*.³⁶ A longer and more comprehensive history of the American Seamen's Friend Society was written in 1932

by its secretary, George Sidney Webster, but he failed to mention *The Christian Herald*. In Webster's opening chapter, entitled "Tributaries," he noted *The Mariner's Magazine* but counted no debt by the society to *The Christian Herald*.³⁷ More recently, *The American Neptune* published an article by Eugene Jackman on efforts made on behalf of seamen before 1825, and he frequently cited *The Christian Herald and Seaman's Magazine* as one of his primary sources.³⁸ Roald Kverndal, in his seminal book *Seamen's Missions*, documented the start of

³⁶Israel P. Warren, *The Seamen's Cause; embracing the History, Results, and Present Condition, of the Efforts for the Moral Improvement of Seamen* (New York: S. Hallet, Printer, 1858?), 12.

³⁷George Sidney Webster, *The Seamen's Friend, A Sketch of The American Seamen's Friend Society* (New York, 1932), 10.

³⁸Eugene T. Jackman, "Efforts Made before 1825 to Ameliorate the Lot of the American Seaman: With Emphasis on Moral Regeneration," *The American Neptune* (1964): 109-118.

The Seaman's Magazine in The Christian Herald by Ward

Stafford. Kverndal described how the impulse for a magazine

came from G. C. Smith in Great Britain, but the idea of

seamen's missions seems to have developed independently on

both sides of the Atlantic.³⁹ The now classic book, *The Rise of*

New York Port, by Robert Albion, has only two brief references

to any bethels in New York. Albion merely noted their failure

to curb the evils of crimps and harlots as they preyed upon the

seamen of the port.⁴⁰

³⁹Roald Kverndal, *Seamen's Missions: Their Origin and Early Growth* (Pasadena, CA: William Carey Library, 1986), 427.

⁴⁰Robert G. Albion, *The Rise of New York Port* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1939), 234.

The pre-Revolution marine societies sought to protect their members from maritime disasters through the storing up of treasures on earth. By contrast, *The Christian Herald* and *Seaman's Magazine* helped mariners to store up treasures in heaven by giving them a written witness that they could carry out to sea.