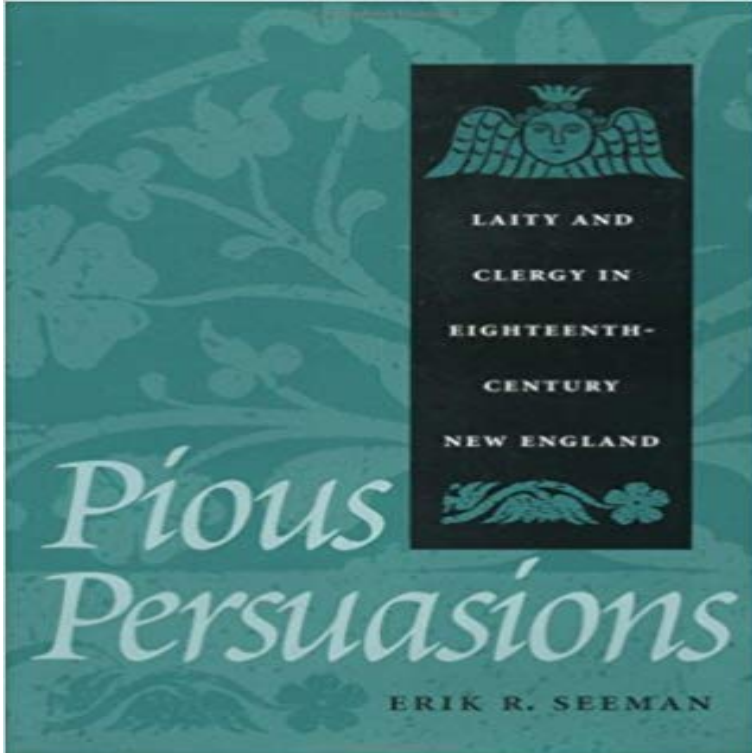


Pious Persuasions: Laity and Clergy in Eighteenth-Century New England (Early America: History, Context, Culture)



Congregational ministers in early New England worked hard to advance the cause of orthodox religion among the regions laypeople, but the peoples willingness to voice differences with their ministers persisted. By the time of the Revolutionary War, New Englanders had established a strong tradition of independent-mindedness, shaped in part by the previous centurys struggles over piety and religious practice. In Pious Persuasions: Laity and Clergy in Eighteenth-Century New England, historian Erik R. Seeman explores both Congregational doctrine and laypeoples practices throughout the 1700s. Seeman looks at the piety of ordinary folk, including a Boston housewright; the interplay of magic and religious culture; the changing experience of women; and the persistence of revivalism. His findings supply a fresh perspective on the Great Awakening of the 1740s, which appears not as a historical turning point but rather as one of four major revivals that fostered communal piety. Seeman further examines how pastors and parishioners negotiated their increasingly contentious religious culture when participating in highly charged events: deathbed scenes, rituals of baptism and the Lords Supper, and religious revivals. Incorporating the widest ranging examination to date of contemporary lay sources -- letters, diaries, conversion narratives, and published poems and broadsides -- Pious Persuasions is a significant work for Early Americanists, social historians, and students of American religion.

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