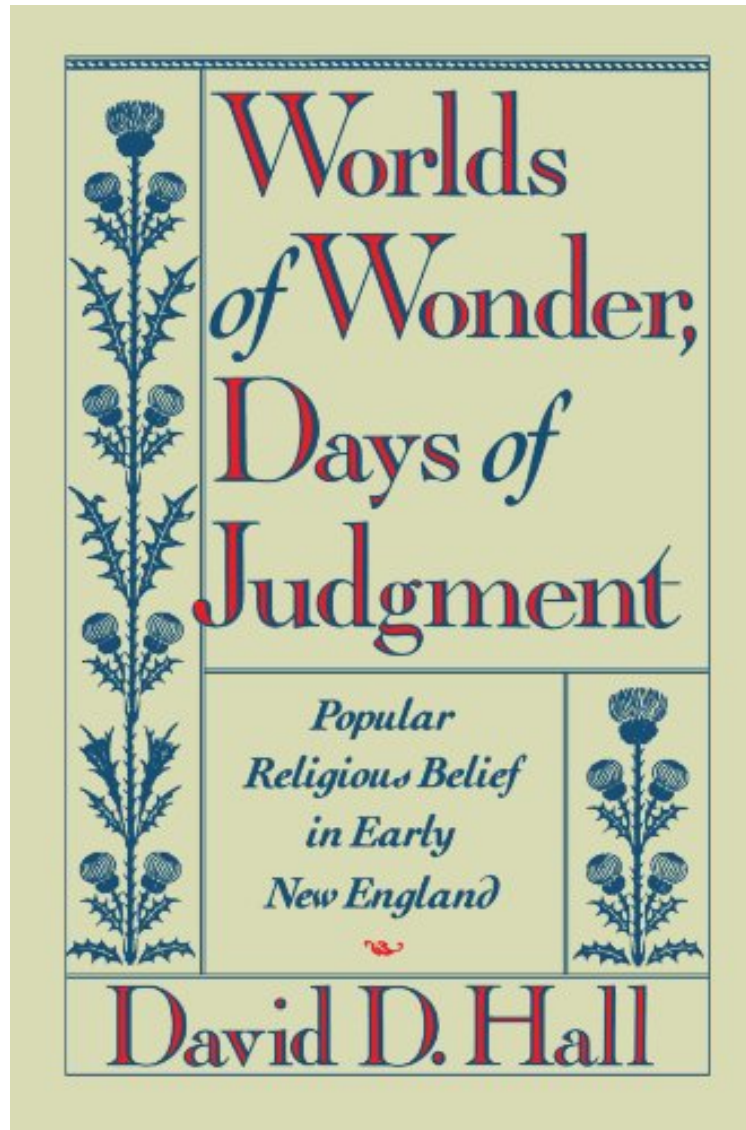


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Worlds of Wonder, Days of Judgment: Popular Religious Belief in Early New England

David D. Hall

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David D. Hall : Worlds of Wonder, Days of Judgment: Popular Religious Belief in Early New England before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Worlds of Wonder, Days of Judgment: Popular Religious Belief in Early New England:

36 of 36 people found the following review helpful. *Worlds of Wonder, Days of Judgement* By ggconHall uses the popular religion of early New England to argue that for clergy and lay people alike religion was a part of everyday life, and although the clergy and lay people's religious interpretations of events could differ their choices of interpretation were limited by their shared culture. Hall argues that the vast majority of the early New Englanders shared a common middle class background and a common religious background influenced by the Reformation. Both the clergy and lay people agreed that it was especially important for each person to be able to read the Bible on his own. But, the power to read the Bible also gave lay people the confidence to have interpretations of the Bible that differed from those of their ministers. The belief in wonders, supernatural events or extraordinary events (earthquakes, meteors, etc.), was a remnant of their Elizabethan culture. Both clergy and lay people attributed religious meanings to wonders, with the clergy sometimes writing popular books detailing wonders. The popularity of these stories encouraged the printing of wonder books not written by clergy as well. By the later 1600's, the clergy were increasingly attributing wonders to explainable natural events, but with the self-confidence gained by their literacy lay people still often gave religious significance to natural events. Their shared culture made universal literacy extremely important, but literacy empowered lay people to disagree with clergy sanctioned interpretations of Scripture. This empowerment of the lay people went so far as to have them feel confident enough to disagree with their ministers over the issue of sacraments, particularly baptism and the rites of the Last Supper. This confidence also gave lay people the ability to break rituals, such as confession, weddings (dancing even though it was prohibited), and sickness (relying on doctors and folk medicine instead of only on prayer). 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Very compelling Memoir of American history By littlecruz Very very very interesting perspective from the settlers and pilgrims era of American religion. I had to read this book for a college course and I must say I was very surprised at how interesting and how compelling this book was. I was able to read the book and be fully engaged with the content despite it being a compulsory read. For anyone who is interested in American history religion or politics you should definitely read this book 0 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By Walker Very helpful for my research. Insightful.

This book tells an extraordinary story of the people of early New England and their spiritual lives. It is about ordinary people--farmers, housewives, artisans, merchants, sailors, aspiring scholars--struggling to make sense of their time and place on earth. David Hall describes a world of religious consensus and resistance: a variety of conflicting beliefs and believers ranging from the committed core to outright dissenters. He reveals for the first time the many-layered complexity of colonial religious life, and the importance within it of traditions derived from those of the Old World. We see a religion of the laity that was to merge with the tide of democratic nationalism in the nineteenth century, and that remains with us today as the essence of Protestant America.

From Publishers Weekly Hall, history professor at Boston University, proffers as the subject of his sixth book "religion as lay men and women knew and practiced it" in 17th century New England. He stresses the significance of the Protestant Reformation in Europe as a people's movement that emphasized the vernacular, as in the Book of Common Prayer, and prepared the ground for spare, ritual-less American Christianity, as exemplified by Cotton Mather's. Hall shows that religion in New England was grounded in almost-universal literacy, enabling colonists to be independent thinkers, even as they argued over dissent, witchcraft and spirituality. His thesis of the religious empowerment of lay people contributes importantly to our understanding of the American heritage. Copyright 1989 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal Noted colonial historian Hall has written an excellent treatment of 17th-century New England religion as it was practiced by the vast majority of the population, not by the clergy. Accepting the current view that the laity absorbed much clerical teaching while adding elements of popular culture to religious practice, he stresses the literacy of ordinary New Englanders and the importance of printers as agents of cultural transmission. An essential purchase for academic libraries, this work offers great insight into Puritan rituals, attitudes toward the natural world, and the creative tension between Puritan laity and clergy. - Susan A. Stussy, St. Norbert Coll., De Pere, Wis. Copyright 1989 Reed Business Information, Inc. *Worlds of Wonder, Days of Judgment* is an extraordinarily rich evocation of the popular culture of seventeenth-century New England...A short review can only hint at the methodological brilliance and the interpretive richness of this relatively brief book. Hall succeeds not only in sketching out a new agenda for study of the New England mind but strikes out skillfully on the task of integrating the beliefs of the colonies with their everyday lives. (Francis J Bremer *Journal of American History*) David Hall has written a work of deep learning and great subtlety. In discussing seventeenth-century New England culture, it provides a new way of looking at religious belief Hall demonstrates that old ways simply will not do, and he redefines the character of religion and culture in New England. He has written a brilliant book, one that will stimulate its readers for many years. (Robert Middlekauff, University of California, Berkeley) In this remarkable book David Hall has carried the study of early New England to new levels of understanding...He shows us, as never before, how the sophisticated doctrines of the Puritan clergy meshed, clashed, and merged with the inherited attitudes and assumptions of ordinary people in their day-to-day grappling with the mysteries of their world. This is a model of historical analysis, not merely for what it tells us about early New England, but also for its brilliant insights into the way religion can operate

in society. (Edmund S. Morgan, Yale University)David Hall's highly innovative new work...provides close reading, profound insights, and trans-Atlantic comparisons that make this a book of very broad significance and interest. (Michael Kamnien, Cornell University)A remarkable work of cultural history... The mentality described will seem alien yet fascinating to most modern readers, but the hardy souls here depicted are people of rare courage and character. Hall deserves high praise for reopening an intellectual pathway to their world. (Booklist)