

He must have five or six separate seasons for private prayer daily, devoting each day in the week to special meditations and intercessions,—as Monday to his family, Tuesday to his enemies, Wednesday to the churches, Thursday to other societies, Friday to persons afflicted, and Saturday to his own soul. He must have private fasts, spending whole days locked in his study and whole nights prostrate on the floor. Cotton Mather 'thought himself starved,' unless he fasted once a month at farthest, while he often did it twice in a week. Then there were public fasts quite frequently, 'because of sins, blastings, mildews, drought, grasshoppers, caterpillars, small pox, loss of cattle by cold and frowns of Providence.' Perhaps a mouse and a snake had a battle in the neighbourhood, and the minister must expound it as 'symbolizing the conflict betwixt Satan and God's poor people,' the latter being the mouse triumphant. Then if there were a military expedition, the minister might think it needful to accompany it. If there were even a muster, he must open and close it with prayer, or, in his absence, the captain must officiate instead.

One would naturally add to this record of labours the attendance on weddings and funerals. It is strange how few years are required to make a usage seem ancestral, or to reunite a traditional broken one. Who now remembers that our progenitors for more than a century disused religious services on both these solemn occasions? Magistrates alone could perform the marriage ceremony; though it was thought to be carrying the monopoly quite too far, when Governor Bellingham, in 1641, officiated at his own. Prayer was absolutely forbidden at funerals, as was done also by Calvin at Geneva, by John Knox in Scotland, by the English Puritans in the Westminster Assembly, and by the French Huguenots. The bell might ring, the friends might walk, two and two, to the grave; but their must be no prayer uttered. The secret was, that the traditions of the English and Romish Churches must be avoided at all sacrifices. 'Doctor,' said King James to a Puritan divine, 'do you go barefoot because the Papists wear shoes and stockings?' Even the origin of the frequent New England habit of eating salt fish on Saturday is supposed to have been the fact that Roman Catholics eat it on Friday."

The intolerant practices of the New England Puritans almost rivalled those of the Church of Rome at that period, only, with the exception of witches, they did not burn their fellow creatures to death, although children, according to the statute book, might be put to death if they "cursed their orderly parents" after the age of sixteen.

Sabbath-breaking was placed on a level with murder—though Calvin himself allowed the old men to play at bowls, and the young men to practise military training, after afternoon service, at Geneva. Down to 1769 not even a funeral could take place on Sunday in Massachusetts, without license from a magistrate. Then the stocks and the wooden cage were in frequent use, though 'barbarous and cruel' punishments were forbidden in 1641. Scolds and railers were set on a ducking-stool and dipped over head and ears three times, in running water, if possible. Mrs. Oliver, a troublesome theologian, was silenced with a cleft stick applied to her tongue. Thomas Scott, in 1649, was sentenced for some offence to learn 'the catechise,' or be fined ten shillings, and, after due consideration, paid the fine. Sometimes offend-