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John Cotton: “Gods Promise to His Plantation” (1630)

Jonathan Beecher Field
Clemson University, jbfield@clemson.edu

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John Cotton: “Gods Promise to
His Plantation” (1630)

(Thanks to Reiner Smolinski for editing, and to University of Nebraska Libraries for hosting.)

John Cotton

- B. 1585, Derbyshire, England.
- D. 1653, Boston, Massachusetts Bay Colony.
- Educated at Trinity & Emmanuel College, Cambridge.
- 1612, becomes minister at St. Botolph's Church in Boston, Lincolnshire.

John Cotton

- 1630, delivers “Gods Promise to His Plantations to the first party of English settlers departing on the *Arbella*.
- 1633, Migrates to New England
- 1633, Becomes minister of Boston church.
- D. 1653, Boston, Massachusetts Bay Colony.

John Cotton

- Growing discontent w/ Church of England, like many clergy at time
 - Anglican church structure/ceremony not consistent w/ scripture
 - Such clergy and followers became known as “Puritans”

John Cotton

- Puritans
 - Less ceremony, more Bible
 - Focus on preaching, rather than prayer books
 - Strong influence of William Perkins (1558-1602)

William Perkins

- Wrote “Arte of Prophecyng,” the unofficial manual for Puritan preachers

Arte of Prophecyng

Libro della Predicatio. Scilicet. 3^{ta}. 80

THE ARTE OF PRO- PHECYING:

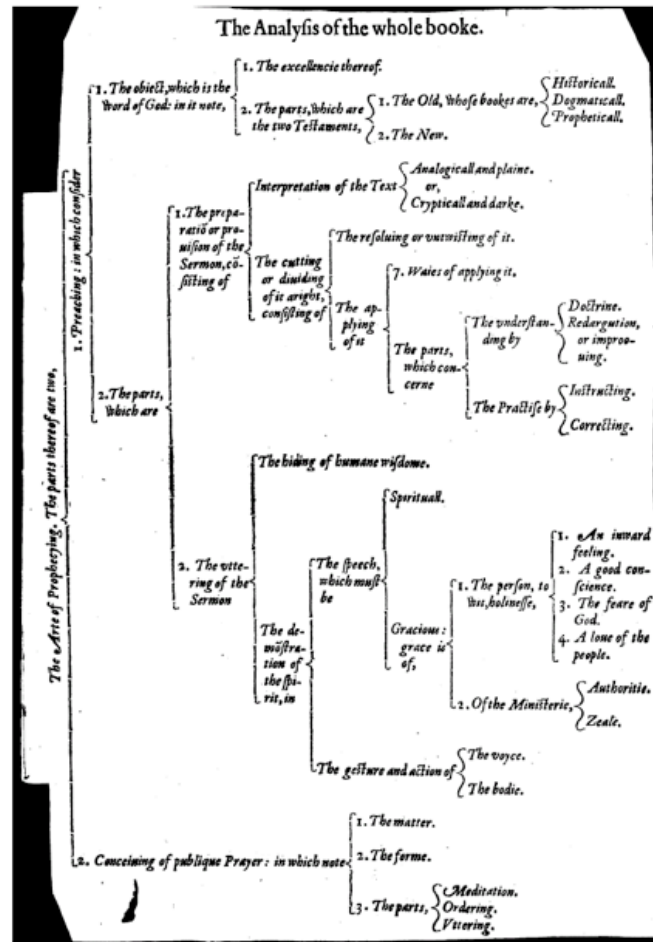
Or
A TREATISE CONCERNING
the sacred and onely true manner and
methode of Preaching.

First written in Latine by Master *William Perkins*: and now faithfully translated into English (for that it containeth many worthie things fit for the knowledge of men of all degrees) by *Thomas Tuke*.

Nehem. 8. 4. 5. 6. And Ezra the Scribe stood upon 1
a pulpit of wood, which hee had made for the
preaching. And Ezra opened the booke before
all the people: for he was above all the people:
and when hee opened it, all the people stood up.
Moreover, Ezra praised the Lord the great 2
God, and all the people answered, Amen. A-
men,—verf. 7. In like manner Iefoua and Ba- 3
ni &c. verf. 8. And they read in the booke of the
law of God distinctly: and gave the sense, and 4
caused them to understand the reading.

Imprinted at London by *Felix Kyngston* for
E. E. and are to be sold in Pauls Church-
yard at the figure of the Swan. 1607.

Arte of Prophecying and Ramusian logic



(the main idea)

THE ORDER AND SUMME
of the facied and only methode
of Preaching.

1. *To read the Text distinctly out of the
Canonicall Scriptures.*
2. *To give the sense and understanding of
it being read, by the Scripture it selfe.*
3. *To collect a few and profitable points of
doltine out of the naturall sense.*
4. *To applie (if he haue the gifts) the do-
ctrines rightly collected to the life
and manners of men, in a simple and
plaine speech.*

The Summe of the Summe.

*Preach one Christ by Christ to the praise
of Christ.*

The Writers which lent their helpe to
the framing of this Arte of Prophe-
cyng are :

*Augustine, Hemingius, Hyperius, Erasmus,
Illyricus, Wigandus, Iacobus, Matthias,
Theodorus Beza, Franciscus Junius.*

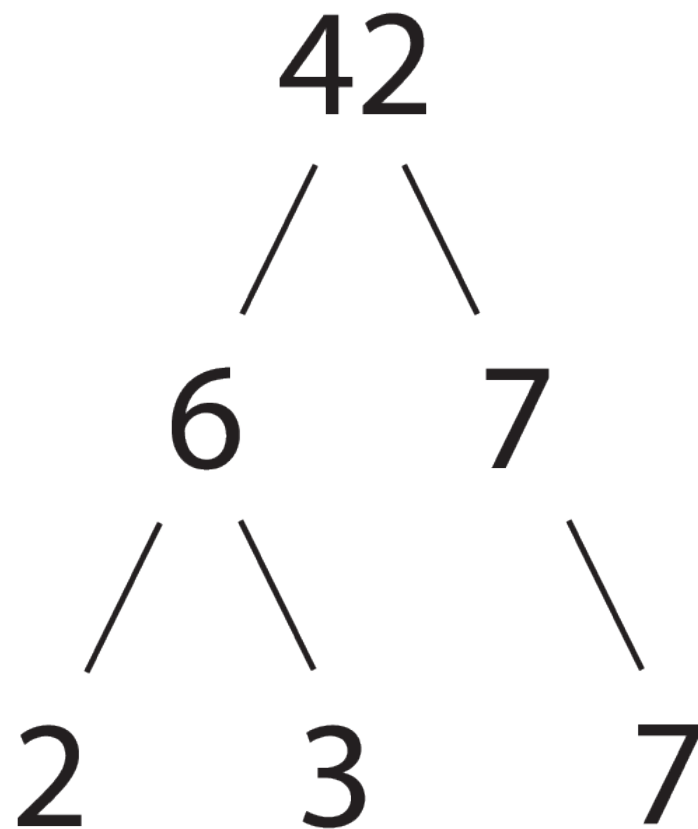
Soli Deo gloria.

Puritan sermon structure

- Doctrine
- Reasons
- Uses

“The Anglican sermon is constructed on a symphonic scheme of progressively widening vision; it moves from point to point by verbal analysis, weaving larger and larger embroideries about the words of the text. The Puritan sermon quotes the text and "opens" it as briefly as possible, expounding circumstances and context, explaining its grammatical meanings, reducing its tropes and schemata to prose, and setting forth its logical implications; the sermon then proclaims in a flat, indicative sentence the "doctrine" contained in the text or logically deduced from it, and proceeds to the first reason or proof. Reason follows reason, with no other transition than a period and a number; after the last proof is stated there follow the uses or applications, also in numbered sequence, and the sermon ends when there is nothing more to be said. The Puritan begins with a reading of the text, states the reason in an order determined by logic, and the uses in an enumeration determined by the kinds of person in the throng who need to be exhorted or reproved, and it stops without flourish or resounding climax" (Perry Miller, *The New England Mind*, p. 332-3)

Like a factor tree for Scripture



Cotton's Verse

2 Sam. 7. 10.

Moreover I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and I will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their owne, and move no more.

Opening the text

- I: (**Opening the text**) God encourages King David two ways:
- Former favors
- Continuing favors—five blessings promised by God to David
 - Will appoint a place
 - Will build him a house
 - Will accept a house from Solomon
 - Will be a father to David's son
 - Will establish throne of his house for ever
- Double blessing promised in verse 10:
 - Designation of place for God's people
 - Plantation of them in that place, with ensuing 3fold blessing:
 - They will dwell like freeholders (landowners)
 - They will move no more
 - They will dwell in peace

Thus – the main point of this verse:

*The placing of a people in this or that Country
is from the appointment of the Lord.*

Question:

- Wherein does this work of God stand in appointing a place for a people?”
 - When God discovers a land for a people
 - When God brings people to a land
 - When God makes room for a people to dwell, which He can do in 3 ways:
 - By casting out the enemies of a people by lawful war
 - By purchase or gift
 - By making the country, ‘though not altogether void of inhabitants, void in that place where they reside.’ Thus “in a vacant soil, he that taketh possession of it , and bestoweth culture and husbandry upon it, his right it is.” See Gen 1:28 and Gen 9:1

How will I know?



Glad you asked:

- III: **(Question)** How shall I know whether God hath appointed me to such a place, if I be well where I am, what may warrant my removal?
- Four or five good things, the procurement of which warrant removal
 - To gain knowledge
 - To further Business and trade
 - To plant a colony—like bees hiving off
 - To employ talents better
 - To seek liberty from unjust laws
- Some evil things, the avoidance of which warrant removal
 - Grievous sins overspreading a country
 - To satisfy burdensome debts
 - To escape persecution
- Special providences or particular cases
 - Command of sovereign
 - Special providence of God, revealed in 3 ways
 - God inclines the heart of man
 - God gives other men hearts to call us
 - God undoes our ties to one place, and makes room for us in another.

Next question

- What is it for God to plant a people?

What is it for God to plant a people?

- A metaphor from farming-God's people will be rooted in a fit place.
 - When he causes God's people to grow as plants do.
 - When he causes them to fructify
 - He plants them, and does not root them up.
 - More especially
 - Temporal:
 - They will have what they had in their old land
 - Their estates will increase in the new land
 - Spiritual:
 - They will become trees of righteousness, a choice generation
- When he plants us, he roots us in Christ
- When he giveth us to grow up in Him as calves in the stall
- To bring forth much fruit
- To continue to abide in a state of grace, to plant us in his holy sanctuary

Finally

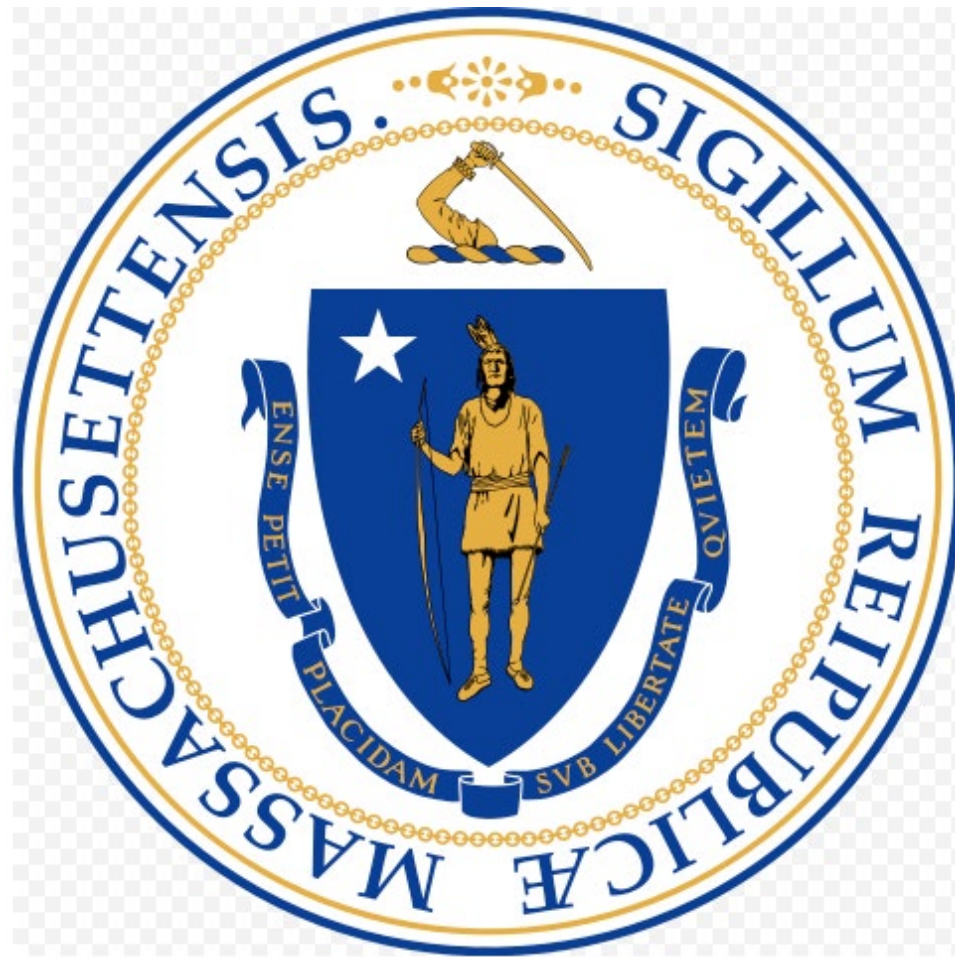
- What course would you have us take?

- Have special care that you ever have the ordinances planted among you
- Have care that you are implanted into the ordinances, that the word might be ingrafted into you, and you into it.
- Be not unmindful of Jerusalem at home
- Go forth with a public spirit—look not on your own things only, but also on the things of others
- Look after your children, so that they do not degenerate
- Offend not the poore natives—as you reap their temporals, so feed them with your spirituals

Last but not least



But still



This image is on every Massachusetts drivers license.

