

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

VOLUME II

	OPP. PAGE
GEORGE WASHINGTON (<i>Photogravure</i>)	<i>Frontispiece</i>
OLIVER CROMWELL	45
BOSSUET	92
FÉNELON	113
MASSILLON	163
LORD MANSFIELD	239
JAMES OTIS	333
EDMUND BURKE	343
(viii)	

JOHN COTTON



R. JOHN COTTON, as in the formal address of his time this distinguished early American divine was called, was born at Derby, England, Dec. 4, 1585, and died at Boston, Mass., Dec. 23, 1652. He was educated at Cambridge, England, and at an early age obtained a fellowship at Emmanuel College there, with a lectureship, and preferment as dean and catechist. He had a high reputation for learning, was a good classical scholar, and notable by his acquaintances with Hebrew. While at college he imbibed Puritan doctrines, and when he became vicar of St. Botolph's, at Boston, in Lincolnshire, he was influential in educating many young men for the ministry, and indoctrinated them with his views of a reformed church. His theological opinions and espousal of Calvinism brought him into trouble with his bishop, and he also fell under the displeasure of Archbishop Laud, who summoned him to appear before the High Commission Court, at London; but, unwilling to obey the summons, Cotton left his church at Boston, where he had labored for twenty years, proceeded to London, and, after a short period in concealment, he took ship for the New World, arriving at Boston, New England, Sept. 8, 1633. Here he became identified with the Massachusetts Bay Colony and was appointed by the magistrates of the town to the pastorate of the First Church at Boston, a connection which Mr. Cotton maintained till his death, nearly twenty years later. Those years in the colony were years of great activity on the part of Cotton. Besides his labors as teacher of his congregation, he engaged in controversial warfare with Roger Williams and others, while at the same time he exercised an almost autocratic influence in the secular affairs of the colony. The vast amount of admiration which his contemporaries paid him does not seem to have turned his head, and while he exacted from everyone a great respect for his office, he was not without the grace of personal humility. His principal writings include "The Bloody Tenet Washed and Made White in the Blood of the Lamb;" "A Brief Exposition upon Ecclesiastes;" "The Keys of the Kingdom of Heaven;" "The Way of the Congregational Churches Cleared;" "The Way of Life;" "Treatise Concerning Predestination;" "The New Covenant;" "Meat for Strong Men;" "Spiritual Milk for Babes." His extraordinary popularity in his own time is now somewhat difficult to understand, for his writings are marked by great simplicity in thought and style.

SERMON ON GOD'S PROMISE TO HIS PLANTATIONS

[This sermon holds the same place in relation to the Massachusetts colony which Robinson's famous sermon at Delfthaven holds in relation to the Plymouth colony. It was the farewell sermon to Winthrop's company, as Robinson's sermon was the farewell to the Pilgrim Fathers.]

"Moreover I will appoint a place for my people Israel, and will plant them, that they may dwell in a place of their own, and move no more."—2 Sam. vii, 10.

IN THE beginning of this chapter we read of David's purpose to build God an house, who thereupon consulted with Nathan about it, one prophet standing in need of another's help in such weighty matters. Nathan encourageth

the king unto this work (verse 3). God the same night meets Nathan and tells him a contrary purpose of his; wherein God refuseth David's offer, with some kind of earnest and vehement dislike (verses 4, 5). Secondly, he refuseth the reason of David's offer, from his long silence. For four hundred years together he spake of no such thing unto any of the tribes of Israel, saying, Why build you not me an house? (verses 6, 7).

Now, lest David should be discouraged with this answer, the Lord bids Nathan to shut up his speech with words of encouragement, and so he removes his discouragement two ways.

First, by recounting his former favors dispensed unto David. Secondly, by promising the continuance of the like or greater: and the rather, because of this purpose of his. And five blessings God promiseth unto David and his, for his sake.

The first is in the tenth verse: "I will appoint a place for my people Israel."

Secondly, seeing it was in his heart to build him an house, God would therefore build him an house renowned forever (verse 11).

Thirdly, that he would accept of an house from Solomon (verse 12).

Fourthly, he will be a Father to his son (verses 14, 15).

Fifthly, that he will establish the throne of his house forever.

In this tenth verse is a double blessing promised:

First, the designment of a place for his people.

Secondly, a plantation of them in that place, from whence is promised a threefold blessing.

First, they shall dwell there like freeholders in a place of their own.

Secondly, he promiseth them firm and durable possession; they shall move no more.

Thirdly, they shall have peaceable and quiet resting there, the sons of wickedness shall afflict them no more: which is amplified by their former troubles, as before time.

From the appointment of a place for them, which is the first blessing, you may observe this note,

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

This is evident in the text, and the Apostle speaks of it as grounded in nature (Acts xvii, 26). God hath determined the times before appointed, and the bounds of our habitation (Deut. ii, 5, 9). God would not have the Israelites meddle with the Edomites or the Moabites, because he had given them their land for a possession. God assigned out such a land for such a posterity and for such a time.

Q. Wherein doth this work of God stand in appointing a place for a people?

Ans. First, when God espies or discovers a land for a people, as in Ezek. xx, 6, he brought them into a land that he had espied for them; and that is, when either he gives them to discover it themselves, or hear of it discovered by others, and fitting them.

Secondly, after he hath espied it, when he carrieth them along to it, so that they plainly see a providence of God leading them from one country to another, as in Ex. xix, 4, You have seen how I have borne you as on eagles' wings, and brought you unto myself. So that though they met with many difficulties, yet he carried them high above them all, like an eagle, flying over seas and rocks and all hindrances.

Thirdly, when he makes room for a people to dwell there, as in Ps. lxxx, 9, Thou preparedst room for them. When

Isaac sojourned among the Philistines, he digged one well, and the Philistines strove for it, and he called it Esek; and he digged another well, and for that they strove also, therefore he called it Sitnah; and he removed thence, and digged another well, and for that they strove not, and he called it Rehoboth, and said, For now the Lord hath made room for us, and we shall be fruitful in the land. Now no Esek, no Sitnah, no quarrel or contention, but now he sits down in Rehoboth in a peaceable room.

Now God makes room for a people three ways:

First, when he casts out the enemies of a people before them by lawful war with the inhabitants, which God calls them unto, as in Ps. xlii, 2, Thou didst drive out the heathen before them. But this course of warring against others and driving them out without provocation depends upon special commission from God, or else it is not imitable.

Secondly, when he gives a foreign people favor in the eyes of any native people to come and sit down with them either by way of purchase, as Abraham did obtain the field of Machpelah; or else when they give it in courtesy, as Pharaoh did the land of Goshen unto the sons of Jacob.

Thirdly, when he makes a country, though not altogether void of inhabitants, yet void in that place where they reside. Where there is a vacant place, there is liberty for the son of Adam or Noah to come and inhabit, though they neither buy it nor ask their leaves. Abraham and Isaac, when they sojourned amongst the Philistines,¹ they did not buy that land to feed their cattle, because they said, There is room

¹ This sojourning was a constant residence there, as in a possession of their own; although it be called sojourning or dwelling as strangers, because they neither had the sovereign government of the whole country in their own hand, nor yet did incorporate themselves into the commonwealth of the natives, to submit themselves unto their government.

enough. And so did Jacob pitch his tent by Sechem (Gen. xxxiv, 21). There was room enough, as Hamor said, Let them sit down amongst us. And in this case, if the people who were former inhabitants did disturb them in their possessions, they complained to the king, as of wrong done unto them, as Abraham did because they took away his well, in Gen. xxi, 25. For his right whereto he pleaded not his immediate calling from God (for that would have seemed frivolous amongst the heathen), but his own industry and culture in digging the well (verse 30). Nor doth the king reject his plea, with what had he to do to dig wells in their soil? but admitteth it as a principle in nature that in a vacant soil he that taketh possession of it and bestoweth culture and husbandry upon it, his right it is. And the ground of this is from the grand charter given to Adam and his posterity in Paradise (Gen. i, 28): "Multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it." If, therefore, any son of Adam come and find a place empty, he hath liberty to come, and fill, and subdue the earth there. This charter was renewed to Noah (Gen. ix, 1): Fulfil the earth and multiply,—so that it is free from that common grant for any to take possession of vacant countries. Indeed no nation is to drive out another without special commission from heaven, such as the Israelites had, unless the natives do unjustly wrong them and will not recompense the wrongs done in peaceable fort, and then they may right themselves by lawful war, and subdue the country unto themselves.

This placing of people in this or that country is from God's sovereignty over all the earth and the inhabitants thereof as in Ps. xxiv, 1, The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof. And in Jer. x, 7, God is there called The King of Nations: and in Deut. x, 14, Therefore it is meet he should pro-

vide a place for all nations to inhabit, and have all the earth replenished. Only in the text here is meant some more special appointment, because God tells them it by his own mouth; he doth not so with other people, he doth not tell the children of Sier that he hath appointed a place for them: that is, he gives them the land by promise; others take the land by his providence, but God's people take the land by promise. And therefore the land of Canaan is called a land of promise. Which they discern, first, by discerning themselves to be in Christ, in whom all the promises are yea and amen.

Secondly, by finding his holy presence with them, to wit, when he plants them in the holy mountain of his inheritance (Ex. xv, 17). And that is when he giveth them the liberty and purity of his ordinances. It is a land of promise, where they have provision for soul as well as for body. Ruth dwelt well for outward respects while she dwelt in Moab, but when she cometh to dwell in Israel she is said to come under the wings of God (Ruth ii, 12). When God wraps us in with his ordinances, and warms us with the life and power of them as with wings, there is a land of promise.

This may teach us all where we do now dwell, or where after we may dwell, be sure you look at every place appointed to you from the hand of God: we may not rush into any place, and never say to God, By your leave; but we must discern how God appoints us this place. There is poor comfort in sitting down in any place, that you cannot say, This place is appointed me of God. Canst thou say that God spied out this place for thee, and there hath settled thee above all hindrances? didst thou find that God made room for thee either by lawful descent, or purchase, or gift, or other warrantable right? Why, then, this is the place God hath

appointed thee; here he hath made room for thee, he hath placed thee in Rehoboth, in a peaceable place. This we must discern, or else we are but intruders upon God. And when we do withal discern that God giveth us these outward blessings from his love in Christ, and maketh comfortable provision as well for our souls as for our bodies, by the means of grace, then do we enjoy our present possession as well by gracious promise as by the common and just and bountiful providence of the Lord. Or if a man do remove, he must see that God hath espied out such a country for him.

Secondly, though there be many difficulties, yet he hath given us hearts to overlook them all, as if we were carried upon eagles' wings.

And thirdly, see God making room for us by some lawful means.

Q. But how shall I know whether God hath appointed me such a place, if I be well where I am, what may warrant my removal?

Ans. There be four or five good things, for procurement of any of which I may remove. Secondly, there be some evil things, for avoiding of any of which we may transplant ourselves. Thirdly, if withal we find some special providence of God concurring in either of both concerning ourselves, and applying general grounds of removal to our personal estate.

First, we may remove for the gaining of knowledge. Our Saviour commends it in the Queen of the South, that she came from the utmost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon (Matt. xii, 42). And surely with him she might have continued for the same end if her personal calling had not recalled her home.

Secondly, some remove and travail for merchandise and gain-sake. Daily bread may be sought from far (Prov. xxxi,

14). Yea, our Saviour approveth travail for merchants (Matt. xiii, 45, 46) when he compareth a Christian to a merchant-man seeking pearls; for he never fetcheth a comparison from any unlawful thing to illustrate a thing lawful. The comparison from the unjust steward and from the thief in the night is not taken from the injustice of the one or the theft of the other; but from the wisdom of the one and the suddenness of the other, which in themselves are not unlawful.

Thirdly, to plant a colony, that is, a company that agree together to remove out of their own country and settle a city or commonwealth elsewhere. Of such a colony we read in Acts xvi, 12, which God blessed and prospered exceedingly and made it a glorious Church. Nature teacheth bees to do so when, as the hive is too full, they seek abroad for new dwellings. So when the hive of the commonwealth is so full that tradesmen cannot live one by another, but eat up one another, in this case it is lawful to remove.

Fourthly, God alloweth a man to remove when he may employ his talents and gift better elsewhere, especially when where he is he is not bound by any special engagement. Thus God sent Joseph before to preserve the Church. Joseph's wisdom and spirit was not fit for a shepherd, but for a counsellor of state, and therefore God sent him into Egypt. To whom much is given of him God will require the more (Luke xii, 48).

Fifthly, for the liberty of the ordinances (2 Chron. xi, 13-15). When Jeroboam made a desertion from Judah and set up golden calves to worship, all that were well affected, both priests and people, sold their possessions and came to Jerusalem for the ordinances' sake. This case was of seasonable use to our fathers in the days of Queen Mary, who removed to France and Germany in the beginning of her

reign, upon proclamation of alteration of religion, before any persecution began.

Secondly, there be evils to be avoided that may warrant removal. First, when some grievous sins overspread a country that threaten desolation (Micah ii, 6-11). When the people say to them that prophesy, Prophecy not; then verse 10: Arise then, this is not your rest. Which words, though, they be a threatening, not a commandment; yet as in a threatening a wise man foreseeeth the plague, so in the threatening he seeth a commandment, to hide himself from it. This case might have been of seasonable use unto them of the Palatinate when they saw their Orthodox ministers banished, although themselves might for a while enjoy liberty of conscience.

Secondly, if men be overburdened with debts and miseries, as David's followers were, they may then retire out of the way (as they retired to David for safety), not to defraud their creditors,—for God is an avenger of such things (1 Thess. iv, 6),—but to gain further opportunity to discharge their debts and to satisfy their creditors (1 Sam. xxii, 1, 2).

Thirdly, in case of persecution, so did the Apostle in Acts xiii, 46, 47.

Thirdly, as these general cases, where any of them do fall out, do warrant removal in general, so there be some special providences or particular cases which may give warrant unto such or such a person to transplant himself, and which apply the former general grounds to particular persons.

First, if sovereign authority command and encourage such plantations by giving way to subjects to transplant themselves and set up a new commonwealth. This is a lawful and expedient case for such particular persons as be designed and sent (Matt. viii, 9), and for such as they who are sent have power to command.