

from *A Modell of Christian Charity*
(1630)

A MODELL HEREOF.

God Almighty in his most holy and wise providence hath soe disposed of the Condicion of mankinde, as in all times some must be rich some poore, some highe and eminent in power and dignitie; others meane and in subjection.

THE REASON HEREOF.

1. REAS: *First*, to hold conformity with the rest of his workes, being delighted to shewe forth the glory of his wisdom in the variety and difference of the Creatures and the glory of his power, in ordering all these differences for the preservacion and good of the whole, and the glory of his greatnes that as it is the glory of princes to have many officers, soe this great King will have many Stewards counting himselfe more honoured in dispenicing his guifts to man by man, then if hee did it by his owne immediate hand.

2. REAS: *Secondly*, That he might have the more occasion to manifest the worke of his Spirit: first, upon the wicked in moderating and restraining them: soe that the riche and mighty should not eate upp the poore, nor the poore, and dispised rise upp against their superiours, and shake off their yoake; 2ly in the regenerate in exercising his graces in them, as in the greates ones, their love mercy, gentlenes, temperance etc., in the poore and inferiour sorte, their faith patience, obedience etc.

3. REAS: *Thirdly*, That every man might have need of other, and from hence they might be all knitt more nearly together in the Bond of brotherly affection: from hence it appeares plainly that noe man is made more honourable then another or more wealthy etc., out of any perticular and singuler respect to himselfe but for the glory of his Creator and the Common good of the Creature, Man; Therefore God still reserves the property of these guifts to himselfe as Ezek: 16. 17. he there calls wealth his gold and his silver etc. Prov: 3.9. He claimes their service as his due honour the Lord with thy riches etc. All men being thus (by divine providence) rancked into two sortes, riche and poore; under the first, are comprehended all such as are able to live comfortably by their owne meanes duely improved; and all others,

are poore according to the former distribution. There are two rules whereby wee are to walke one towards another: JUSTICE and MERCY. These are allwayes distinguished in their Act and in their object, yet may they both concur in the same Subject in each respect; as sometimes there may be an occasion of shewing mercy to a rich man, in some sudden danger of distresse, and allsoe doing of meere Justice to a poor man in regard of some perticular contract etc. There is likewise a double Lawe by which wee are regulated in our conversacion one towards another: in both the former respects, the lawe of nature and the lawe of grace, or the morrall lawe or the lawe of the gospell, to omitt the rule of Justice as not properly belonging to this purpose otherwise then it may fall into consideration in some perticular Cases: By the first of these lawes man as he was enabled soe withall [is] commaunded to love his neighbour as himselfe¹ upon this ground stands all the precepts of the morrall lawe, which concernes our dealings with men. To apply this to the works of mercy this lawe requires two things first that every man afford his help to another in every want or distresse Secondly, That hee performe this out of the same affection, which makes him carefull of his owne good according to that of our Saviour Math: [7.12] Whatsoever ye would that men should doe to you. This was practised by Abraham and Lott in enter-taineing the Angells and the old man of Gibeā.²

The Lawe of Grace or the Gospell hath some difference from the former as in these respectes first the lawe of nature was given to man in the estate of innocency; this of the gospell in the estate of regeneracy; 2ly, the former propounds one man to another, as the same fleshe and Image of god, this as a brother in Christ allsoe, and in the Communion of the same spirit and soe teacheth vs to put a difference betweene Christians and others. Doe good to all especially to the household of faith;³ upon this ground the Israelites were to putt a difference betweene the brethren of such as were strangers though not of the Canaanites. 3ly. The Lawe of nature could give noe rules for dealing with enemies for all are to be considered as freinds in the estate of innocency, but the Gospell commaunds love to an enemy. proove. If thine Enemy hunger feede him; Love your Enemies doe good to them that hate you Math: 5.44.

This Lawe of the Gospell propounds likewise a difference of seasons and occasions there is a time when a christian must sell all and give to the poore as they did in the Apostles times.⁴ There is a tyme allsoe when a christian (though they give not all yet) must give beyond their ability, as they of Macedonia. Cor: 2.6⁵ likewise community of perills calls for extraordinary liberallity and soe doth Community in some speciall service for the Church. Lastly, when there is noe other

meanes whereby our Christian brother may be releived in this distresse, wee must help him beyond our ability, rather then tempt God, in putting him upon help by miraculous or extraordinary meanes. . . .

From hence wee may frame these Conclusions.

1 first all true Christians are of one body in Christ 1. Cor. 12. 12. 13. 17. [27.] Ye are the body of Christ and members of [your?] parte.

2ly. The ligamentes of this body which knitt together are love.

3ly. Noe body can be perfect which wants its propper ligamentes.

4ly. All the partes of this body being thus united are made soe contiguous in a speciall relacion as they must needes partake of each others strength and infirmity, ioy, and sorrowe, weale and woe. 1 Cor: 12. 26. If one member suffers all suffer with it, if one be in honour, all reioyce with it.

5ly. This sensiblenes and Sympathy of each others Condictions will necessarily infuse into each parte a native desire and endeavour, to strengthen defend preserve and comfort the other.

To insist a little on this Conclusion being the product of all the former the truthe hereof will appeare both by precept and patterne i. John. 3. 10. yee ought to lay downe your lives for the brethren Gal: 6. 2. beare ye one anothers burthens and soe fulfill the lawe of Christ. . . .

It rests now to make some application of this discourse by the present designe which gave the occasion of writeing of it. Herein are 4 things to be propounded: first the persons, 2ly, the worke, 3ly, the end, 4ly the meanes.

1. For the persons, wee are a Company professing our selves fellow members of Christ, In which respect onely though wee were absent from eache other many miles, and had our employmentes as farre distant, yet wee ought to account our selves knitt together by this bond of love, and live in the exercise of it, if wee would have comforte of our being in Christ, this was notorious in the practise of the Christians in former times, as is testified of the Waldenses⁶ from the mouth of one of the adversaries Aeneas Sylvius,⁷ *mutuo [solent amare] penè antequam norint*, they use to love any of their owne religion even before they were acquainted with them.

2ly. for the worke wee have in hand, it is by a mutuall consent through a speciall overruleing providence, and a more then an ordinary approbation of the Churches of Christ to seeke out a place of Cohabitation and Consorteshipp under a due forme of Government both civill and ecclesiasticall. In such cases as this the care of the publike must oversway all private respects, by which not onely conscience, but meare Civill pollicy doth binde us; for it is a true rule that perticuler estates cannott subsist in the ruine of the publike.

3ly. The end is to improve our lives to doe more service to the Lord the comforte and encrease of the body of christe whereof wee are members that our selves and posterity may be the better preserved from the Common corrupcions of this evill world to serve the Lord and worke out our Salvacion under the power and purity of his holy Ordinances.

4ly for the meanes whereby this must bee effected, they are 2fold, a Conformity with the worke and end wee aime at, these wee see are extraordinary, therefore wee must not content our selves with usuall ordinary meanes whatsoever wee did or ought to have done when wee lived in England, the same must wee doe and more allsoe where wee goe: That which the most in their Churches maineteine as a truthe in profession onely, wee must bring into familiar and constant practise, as in this duty of love wee must love brotherly without dissimulation, wee must love one another with a pure hearte fervently wee must beare one anothers burthens, wee must not looke onely on our owne things, but allsoe on the things of our brethren, neither must wee think that the lord will beare with such faileings at our hands as hee dothe from those among whome wee have lived. . . .

Thus stands the cause betweene God and us, wee are entered into Covenant with him for this worke, wee have taken out a Commission, the Lord hath given us leave to drawe our owne Articles wee have professed to enterprise these Accions upon these and these ends, wee have hereupon besought him of favour and blessing: Now if the Lord shall please to heare us, and bring us in peace to the place wee desire, then hath hee ratified this Covenant and sealed our Commission, [and] will expect a strickt performance of the Articles contained in it, but if wee shall neglect the observacion of these Articles which are the ends wee have propounded, and dissembling with our God, shall fall to embrace this present world and prosecute our carnall intencions, seekeing greate things for our selves and our posterity, the Lord will surely breake out in wrathe against us be revenged of such a periured people and make us knowe the price of the breache of such a Covenant.

Now the onely way to avoyde this shipwracke and to provide for our posterity is to followe the Counsell of Micah, to doe Justly, to love mercy, to walke humbly with our God,⁸ for this end, wee must be knitt together in this worke as one man, wee must entertaine each other in brotherly Affeccion, wee must be willing to abridge our selves of our superfluities, for the supply of others necessities, wee must uphold a familiar Commerce together in all meekenes, gentlenes, patience and liberallity, wee must delight in eache other, make others Condictions our owne reioyce together, mourne together, labour, and suffer together, allwayes haveing before our eyes our Commission and Com-

munity in the worke, our Community as members of the same body, soe shall wee keepe the unitie of the spirit in the bond of peace,⁹ the Lord will be our God and delight to dwell among us, as his owne people and will commaund a blessing upon us in all our wayes, soe that wee shall see much more of his wisdome power goodnes and truthe then formerly wee have beene acquainted with, wee shall finde that the God of Israell is among us, when tenn of us shall be able to resist a thousand of our enemies, when hee shall make us a prayse and glory, that men shall say of succeeding plantacions: the lord make it like that of New England: for wee must Consider that wee shall be as a Citty upon a Hill,¹⁰ the eies of all people are uppon us; soe that if wee shall deale falsely with our god in this worke wee have undertaken and soe cause him to withdrawe his present help from us, wee shall be made a story and a by-word through the world, wee shall open the mouthes of enemies to speake evill of the wayes of god and all professours for Gods sake; wee shall shame the faces of many of gods worthy servants, and cause their prayers to be turned into Curses upon us till wee be consumed out of the good land whether wee are going: And to shutt upp this discourse with that exhortacion of Moses that faithfull servant of the Lord in his last farewell to Israell Deut. 30. Beloved there is now sett before us life, and good, death and evill in that wee are Commaunded this day to love the Lord our God, and to love one another to walke in his wayes and to keepe his Commaundements and his Ordinance, and his lawes, and the Articles of our Covenant with him that wee may live and be multiplyed, and that the Lord our God may blesse us in the land whether wee goe to possesse it: But if our heartes shall turne away soe that wee will not obey, but shall be seduced and worshipp [serve *cancelled*] other Gods our pleasures, and proffitts, and serve them; it is propounded unto us this day, wee shall surely perishe out of the good Land whether wee passe over this vast Sea to possesse it;

Therefore lett us choose life,
that wee, and our Seede,
may live; by obeyeing his
voyce, and cleaving to him,
for he is our life, and
our prosperity.

*John Winthrop's Christian
Experience (1637)*

In my youth I was very lewdly disposed, inclining unto and attempting (so far as my yeares enabled mee) all kind of wickednesse, except swearing and scorning religion, which I had no temptation unto in regard of my education. About ten years of age, I had some notions of God, for in some great frightening or danger, I have prayed unto God, and have found manifest answer; the remembrance whereof many yeares after made mee think that God did love mee, but it made mee no whit the better:

After I was 12. yeares old, I began to have some more savour of Religion, and I thought I had more understanding in Divinity then many of my yeares; for in reading of some good books I conceived, that I did know divers of those points before, though I knew not how I should come by such knowledge (but since I perceived it was out of some logicall principles, whereby out of some things I could conclude others) yet I was still very wild, and dissolute, and as yeares came on my lusts grew stronger, but yet under some restraint of my naturall reason; whereby I had the command of my self that I could turne into any form. I would as occasion required write letters etc. of meer vanity; and if occasion were I could write others of savory and godly counsell.

About 14 years of age, being in Cambridge¹ I fell into a lingring feaver, which took away the comfort of my life. For being there neglected, and despised, I went up and down mourning with myself; and being deprived of my youthfull joyes, I betook my self to God whom I did believe to bee very good and mercifull, and would welcome any that would come to him, especially such a yongue soule, and so well qualified as I took my self to bee; so as I took pleasure in drawing neer to him. But how my heart was affected with my sins, or what thoughts I had of Christ I remember not. But I was willing to love God, and therefore I thought hee loved mee. But so soon as I recovered my perfect health, and met with somewhat els to take pleasure in, I forgot my former acquaintance with God, and fell to former lusts, and grew worse then before. Yet some good moodes I had now, and then, and sad checks of my naturall Conscience, by which the Lord preserved mee from some foule sins, which otherwise I had fallen into. But my lusts were so masterly as no good could fasten upon mee, otherwise then to hold mee to some task of ordinary duties for I cared for nothing but how to satisfy my voluptuous heart.

About 18 yeares of age (being a man in stature, and in understanding as my parents conceived mee) I married into a family under

Mr. Culverwell his ministry in Essex; and living there sometimes I first found the ministry of the word to come to my heart with power (for in all before I found onely light) and after that I found the like in the ministry of many others. So as there began to bee some change which I perceived in my self, and others took notice of. Now I began to come under strong excersises of Conscience: (yet by fits only) I could no longer dally with Religion. God put my soule to sad tasks sometimes, which yet the flesh would shake off, and outweare still. I had withall many sweet invitations which I would willingly have intertained, but the flesh would not give up her interest. The mercifull Lord would not thus bee answered, but notwithstanding all my stubbornesse, and unkind rejections of mercy, hee left mee not till hee had overcome my heart to give up itself to him, and to bid farewell to all the world, and untill my heart could answer, Lord what wilt thou have mee to doe?

Now came I to some peace and comfort in God and in his wayes, my cheif delight was therein, I loved a Christian, and the very ground hee went upon. I honoured a faythful minister in my heart and could have kissed his feet: Now I grew full of zeal (which outranne my knowledge and carried mee sometimes beyond my calling) and very liberall to any good work. I had an unsatiable thirst after the word of God and could not misse a good sermon, though many miles off, especially of such as did search deep into the conscience. I had also a great striveing in my heart to draw others to God. It pittied my heart to see men so little to regard their soules, and to despise that happines which I knew to bee better then all the world besides, which stirred mee up to take any opportunity to draw men to God, and by successe in my endeavors I took much encouragement hereunto. But those affections were not constant but very unsetled. By these occasions I grew to bee of some note for religion (which did not a little puffe me up) and divers would come to mee for advice in cases of conscience; and if I heard of any that were in trouble of mind I usually went to comfort them; so that upon the bent of my spirit this way and the successe I found of my endeavors, I gave up my selfe to the study of Divinity, and intended to enter into the ministry, if my friends had not diverted mee.

But as I grew into employment and credit thereby; so I grew also in pride of my guifts, and under temptations which sett mee on work to look to my evidence more narrowly then I had done before (for the great change which God had wrought in mee, and the generall approbation of good ministers and other Christians, kept mee from making any great question of my good estate, though my secrett corruptions, and some tremblings of heart (which was greatest when I was among the most Godly persons) put me to some plunges; but especially when I perceived a great decay in my zeale and love, etc.) And hearing some-

times of better assurance by the seale of the spirit, which I also knew by the word of God, but could not, nor durst say that ever I had it; and finding by reading of Mr. Perkins² and other books that a reprobate might (in appearance) attaine to as much as I had done: finding withall much hollownes and vaine glory in my heart, I began to grow very sad, and knew not what to doe, I was ashamed to open my case to any minister that knew mee; I feared it would shame my self and religion also, that such an eminent professour as I was accounted, should discover such corruptions as I found in my selfe, and had in all this time attained no better evidence of salvation; and I should prove a hypocrite it was too late to begin anew: I should never repent in truth having repented, so oft as I had done. It was like hell to mee to think of that in Hebr. 6. Yet I should sometimes propound questions afarre off to such of the most Godly ministers as I mett, which gave mee ease for the present, but my heart could not find where to rest; but I grew very sad, and melancholy; and now to hear others applaud mee was a dart through my liver; for still I feared I was not sound at the root, and sometimes I had thoughts of breaking from my profession, and proclaiming myself an Hipocrite. But those troubles came not all at once but by fits, for sometimes I should find refreshing in prayer, and sometimes in the love that I had had to the Saints: which though it were but poor comfort (for I durst not say before the Lord that I did love them in truth) yet the Lord upheld mee, and many times outward occasions put these feares out of my thoughts. And though I had knowne long before the Doctrine of free Justification by Christ and had often urged it upon my owne soul and others, yet I could not close with Christ to my satisfaction. I have many times striven to lay hold upon Christ in some promise and have brought forth all the arguments that I had for my part in it. But instead of finding it to bee mine, I have lost sometimes the fayth of the very general truth of the promise, sometimes after much striveing by prayer for fayth in Christ, I have thought I had received some power to apply Christ unto my soule: but it was so doubtfull as I could have little comfort in it, and it soon vanished.

Upon these and the like troubles, when I could by no meanes attaine sure and setled peace; and that which I did get was still broken off upon every infirmity; I concluded there was no way to help it, but by walking more close with God and more strict observation of all duties; and hereby though I put myself to many a needlesse task, and deprived my self of many lawfull comforts, yet my peace would fayle upon every small occasion, and I was held long under great bondage to the Law (sinne, and humble myself; and sinne, and to humiliation again, and so day after day) yet neither got strength to my Sanctification nor betterd my Evidence, but was brought to such bondage, as

I durst not use any recreation, nor meddle with any worldly businesse etc.: for feare of breaking my peace (which even such as it was, was very preteous to mee) but this would not hold neither, for then I grew very melancholy and mine own thoughts wearied mee, and wasted my spirits.

While I wandred up and downe in this sad and doubtful estate (wherein yet I had many intermissions, for the flesh would often shake off this yoake of the law, but was still forced to come under it again) wherein my greatest troubles were not the sense of Gods wrath or fear of damnation, but want of assurance of salvation, and want of strength against my corruptions; I knew that my greatest want was fayth in Christ, and faine would I have been united to Christ but I thought I was not holy enough. I had many times comfortable thoughts about him in the word prayer, and meditation, but they gave mee no satisfaction but brought mee lower in mine own eyes, and held mee still to a constant use of all meanes, in hope of better thinges to come. Sometimes I was very confident that hee had given mee a hungry and thirsting soule after Christ and therefore would surely satisfy mee in his good time. Sometimes againe I was ready to entertaine secret murmurings that all my paines and prayers etc. should prevayle no more: but such thoughts were soon rebuked: I found my heart still willing to justify God. Yea I was perswaded I should love him though hee should cast mee off.

Being in this condition it pleased the Lord in my family exercise to manifest unto mee the difference between the Covenant of grace, and the Covenant of workes (but I took the foundation of that of workes to have been with man in innocency, and onely held forth in the law of Moses to drive us to Christ). This Covenant of grace began to take great impression in mee and I thought I had now enough: To have Christ freely, and to bee justified freely was very sweet to mee; and upon sound warrant (as I conceived) but I could not say with any confidence, it had been sealed to mee, but I rather took occasion to bee more remisse in my spirituall watch, and so more loose in my conversation.

I was now about 30 yeares of age, and now was the time come that the Lord would reveale Christ unto mee whom I had long desired, but not so earnestly as since I came to see more clearly into the covenant of free grace. First therefore hee laid a sore affliction upon mee wherein hee laid mee lower in myne owne eyes then at any time before, and showed mee the emptines of all my guifts, and parts; left mee neither power nor will, so as I became as a weaned child. I could now no more look at what I had been or what I had done nor bee discontented for want of strength or assurance mine eyes were onely upon his free mercy in Jesus Christ. I knew I was worthy of nothing for I

knew I could doe nothing for him or for my selfe. I could only mourn, and weep to think of free mercy to such a vile wretch as I was. Though I had no power to apply it yet I felt comfort in it. I did not long continue in this estate, but the good spirit of the Lord breathed upon my soule, and said I should live. Then every promise I thought upon held forth Christ unto me saying I am thy salvation. Now could my soule close with Christ, and rest there with sweet content, so ravished with his love, as I desired nothing nor feared anything, but was filled with joy unspeakable, and glorious and with a spirit of Adoption. Not that I could pray with more fervency or more enlargement of heart than sometimes before, but I could now cry my father with more confidence. Mee thought this condition and that frame of heart which I had after, was in respect of the former like the reigne of Solomon, free, peaceable, prosperous and glorious, the other more like that of Ahaz, full of troubles, feares and abasements. And the more I grew thus acquainted with the spirit of God the more were my corruptions mortified, and the new man quickened: the world, the flesh and Satan were for a time silent, I heard not of them: but they would not leave mee so. This Estate lasted a good time (divers months), but not alwayes alike, but if my comfort, and joy slackened a while, yet my peace continued, and it would returne with advantage. I was now growne familiar with the Lord Jesus Christ, hee would oft tell mee he loved mee, I did not doubt to believe him; If I went abroad hee went with mee, when I returned hee came home with mee. I talked with him upon the way, hee lay down with mee and usually I did awake with him. Now I could goe into any company and not loose him: and so sweet was his love to mee as I desired nothing but him in heaven or earth.

This Estate would not hold neither did it decline suddainly but by degrees. And though I found much spirituall strength in it, yet I could not discern but my hunger after the word of God, and my love to the Saints had been as great (if not more) in former times. One reason might bee this, I found that the many blemishes and much hollow heartednesse which I discerned in many professors, had weakned the esteem of a Christian in my heart. And for my comfort in Christ, as worldly employments, and the love of temporall things did steal away my heart from him so would his sweet countenance bee withdrawne from mee. But in such a condition hee would not long leave mee, but would still recall mee by some word or affliction or in prayer or meditation, and I should then bee as a man awakened out of a dreame or as if I had been another man. And then my care was (not so much to get pardon for that was sometimes sealed to mee while I was purposing to goe seek it, and yet sometimes I could not obtaine it without seeking and wayteing also but) to mourn for my ingratitude towards my God,

and his free, and rich mercy. The consideration whereof would break my heart more, and wring more teares from myne eyes, then ever the fear of Damnation or any affliction had done; so as many times and to this very day a thought of Christ Jesus, and free grace bestowed on mee melts my heart that I cannot refraine.

Since this time I have gone under continuall conflicts between the flesh and the spirit, and sometimes with Satan himself (which I have more discerned of late then I did formerly) many falls I have had, and have lyen long under some, yet never quite forsaken of the Lord. But still when I have been put to it by any suddaine danger or fearefull temptation, the good spirit of the Lord hath not fayled to beare witness to mee, giveing mee comfort, and courage in the very pinch, when of my self I have been very fearefull, and dismayed. My usuall falls have been through dead heartedness, and presumptuousnesse, by which Satan hath taken advantage to wind mee into other sinnes. When the flesh prevayles the spirit withdrawes, and is sometimes so greived as hee seemes not to acknowledge his owne work. Yet in my worst times hee hath been pleased to stirre, when hee would not speak, and would yet support mee that my fayth hath not fayled utterly. . . .

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