“A Model of Christian Charity”

Sermon by John Winthrop

This sermon was delivered by John Winthrop aboard the ship The Arbella, when traveling with other Puritans to New England in 1630. Its most famous phrase, which is often quoted, relates the simile of the “City on a Hill.”

Below find excerpt from the sermon.

for we must Consider that we shall be as a City upon a Hill, the eyes of all people are upon us; so that if we shall deal falsely with our God in this work we have undertaken and so cause him to withdraw his present help from us, we shall be made a story and a byword through the world, we shall open the mouths of enemies to speak evil of the ways of God . . . . ; we shall shame the faces of many of God’s worthy servants, and cause their prayers to be turned into curses upon us till we be consumed out of the good land wither we are going:

And to [end] this discourse with that exhortation of Moses . . . in his last farewell to Israel “Beloved there is now set before us life, and good, death and evil in that we are commanded this day to love the Lord our God, and to love one another, to walk in His ways and to keep His Commandments . . . and his laws, and the Articles of our own Covenant with him that we may live and be multiplied, and that the Lord our God may blesse us in the land whither we go to possess it: But if our hearts shall turn away so that we will not obey, but shall be seduced and worship . . . our pleasures and profits, and serve them, it is propounded unto us this day, we shall surely perish out of this good Land wee pass over this vast Sea to possess . . .

Therefore let us choose life,

that we, and our [children to come],

may live; by obeying his

voice, and cleaving to him,

for He is our life, and

our prosperity.