

A Saint in Christ

“Cluster of Canaan’s Grapes” 1649.

Robert Tichborne

I have delightfully looked upon these Clusters of Canaan’s Grapes, and have helped them to the Press, that they may be Wine for common drinking; I only mind the reader, that these Grapes yield the New Wine of the Gospel; let him take heed he puts it not into the Old Bottles of envy or of malice, of prejudice or of contempt; if he do, his Bottles will break; and though the wine, {because it is saving wine} cannot but be safe, yet himself will be a loser, yea, in danger to be lost; whereas, his profit and salvation are {I believe, on this side the glory of God} the highest end of the Author, is this publication, as they are of the licenser.

JOSEPH CARYL

What a saint is not?

What a spiritual saint is; first he is more than a moral man; for he that is less than a moral man is a beast, and he that is at the height of a moral man is but merely a man, a fine civilized piece of clay, loving himself, and therefore doth not devour one another, because another man should not devour him; decked with his own accomplishments, and glorying in his own Babel, but surely a spiritual saint is more than this! Yea secondly; he is more than a formal or legal professor. What is a formal professor? He is one that lives by sense, and not by faith, that is only taught of man and not of God, that hath all his light from within him, from the practice and notion of others, and not from the precepts or Spirit of God within him. A formal professor is one that can see and practice anything which may please all, or, the most of men; he is always learning, but never learned, because he is always studying man and never Christ; he is one which you shall ever find in the crowd where the majority are, there you shall be sure to find him. If you meet him and tell him of a Christ crucified, “I but {saith he,} doth any of the Pharisees believe in his name?” He is a man much in worship, but the inscription is to the unknown God; his eyes are in another’s head, and therefore he is led about by another to act as a blind man; no form comes amiss to him, for he is nothing else but form; he is one so ignorant as that he thinks it a crime for any man to see more than himself, though he be blind; and if the man that sees will but deny his light, he will do the best he can to pluck out his eyes; he is so proud of his chains of darkness that none shall live where he can rule that will not wear his feathers; this soul is mother and nurse both, to that brat of hell, the persecution of the true saints; this man of form

knows no heights, breadths or length above himself, and if he snatch a piece of the Word of God, he only hath it in the letter, and so never reaches Christ in it; this is a formal professor.

But what is a legal professor? He is a man seemingly nearer heaven, but if he be not carried along further no man farther from it, for he is a man full of the word in the letter; but altogether empty of it in the Spirit; he is a man exact in the language of Mount Sinai, but cannot pronounce a plain syllable of the language of Zion; he can tell you that God is a just God, and a severe Judge, a revenger of himself upon sinners, but is not able to pronounce God as a Father, and a reconciled God in Christ; he is exact to tell you of precept, duty and transgression, but is not able to unfold the Mysteries of Godliness, Christ in the flesh; if a word of Christ drop out of his mouth, it is to tell you what qualifications must fit you for Christ as he thinks; when he hath found a leprous soul of sin, he cannot show it Christ, but says he, "go wash in the tears of repentance and you shall be clean," though he never show him Christ which must wash his repentance; if he finds a poor saint under some affliction, he cannot make up the wound by leading the soul to the love of God, from whence that affliction came, but saith he, "look into yourself, inquire for that sin the punishment of which you now lie under, God is a just God, if you will sin you must bear the indignation of the Lord for it; go fall on your knees, weep and fast, and pray and vow, make God some amends." This is all the relief he can give, and so he pours oil into the flames of sorrow, and vinegar into the bleeding wounds of poor saints. This legal soul lives upon his duties, and not upon the Free Grace of God in Christ, and therefore he can give no other counsel than he hath experience of, for he never tasted in the spirit the goodness of the Lord, and therefore can never speak good to his own soul, or any other from God; and if he speak any good to a soul it is from duties; "do and live," is the effect of all his language. I only give this as a word of caution, that we hearken not to the councils of such men, lest we become like those foolish Galatians, which began in the spirit, but were like to end in the flesh. Let this be enough in the negative what a spiritual saint is not.

What a saint is?

But then what is a spiritual Saint? Why he is one that lives by faith above sense; one that is all in God, and nothing in himself; he is taught of God to know him; he is drawn by God to love him; he is persuaded by God to trust in him; he is filled with God, and lives upon him; he is satisfied with Christ, and rejoices in him; he so lives in Christ, that he makes his boast of him, as the Apostle, Romans 8, the latter end. "Who shall condemn; nay who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect?" He is one which in the spirit is able to look from eternity to eternity, and therein behold that eternal love of God which gave out Christ to manifest his love to us in him, and hath made him one with Christ in all his merits, righteousness and

benefits; he is able to see into that love and eternal purpose of God that made Christ to be sin for us, "that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." He can see God his Father, and in the spirit of adoption call him Father; he can read his Salvation written in the Covenant of Grace; he can behold himself one in Christ, as Christ is in God; he assuredly knows that Christ hath borne his grief, and that God hath wounded Christ for his transgressions, bruised him for his iniquities, and laid the chastisement of his peace on him, and all this so fully and really, as that by the stripes that God laid on Christ, his soul is healed. He sees that God hath made Christ's soul an offering for the sins of his people; and that he hath beheld the travail of his soul, and is well pleased; so that now this spiritual man draws up this conclusion. Whatever of sin and punishment was mine, was taken from me, and made Christ's, and he has fully satisfied for the one, and borne the other; so that now from the justice of God I can conclude this, that neither of them shall be laid on me again. Christ's Righteousness and his glory is so made mine, that I stand spotless in the one, and shall be perfect in the other to all eternity. Thus is a spiritual soul led up to God, and made to know his great design from eternity; namely, to make Christ his wisdom, righteousness, sanctification and redemption, and that in all these he stands perfect before God, in the perfection of Christ.

This soul lives in the region of God's love, and in Christ's Righteousness, and sees himself above all condemnation; and yet the least transgression {in him} discovered to him by the love and Spirit of God, melts his contrite heart into nothing; "I see {says he,} that I am alive in Christ through the eternal love of God, and that makes me thus judge, that if one died for all, then were all dead. I died to sin in Christ, and if now I live, it should not be to myself but to Christ." {II Cor.5:14,15} And to this the love of Christ constrains me; for, {says he,} "this I know, whoever is in Christ is a new creature, old things are passed away and behold all things are become new." {vs.17} And therefore saith he, "whatever is sin is the old man;" and of this he cries out as the Apostle in Romans 7:24, "O wretched man that I am;" the law of my flesh rebels against the law of my mind. Sin hath less entertainment nowhere than where the love of God by his Spirit dwells, for perfect love casts out fear, {saith the text,} and perfect love kills corruption. Love to Christ kills and buries sin, when legal fear only lays it on the ground, and thus it lives again and possibly kills the legalist at last; but the spiritual man keeps nothing to himself, but carries all to God and Christ; he lives only in God and Christ; and when he finds corruption in himself, he presently by the Spirit lays it down at the feet of Christ, and tells him, "Oh Lord, my glory, {saith he,} is to live to thee and whatsoever is thine. Oh then {oh Lord,} be zealous of thy glory; thou has taken the guilt and punishment of all my corruptions from me; is it not also for thy glory to take the reign and the power of them from me too?" Yes, {saith Christ,} and I will make my promise good, for "sin shall not have dominion over you, for you are not under the Law, but under Grace." {Rom.6:14} "True Lord, {says the soul,} and I believe it, that to live under the reign of Grace is the only

way to keep sin under me." Thus a spiritual soul having a sight of his sins, of all men hath least fear in point of condemnation, because this soul is filled with the perfect love of God which casts out fear, but the inbeing of this love of God in the soul makes as little love to all the incitements of sin, as it hath fear of the condemnation thereof. Sin in all its temptations hath the quickest denial from such a soul of any, for he answers sin thus; "sin, {says he,} the love of Christ constrains me to hate thee;" this soul tells sin he will but lose his labor in tempting him, "for, {says he,} I am not at my own disposing, I have given myself up to Christ already, and Christ have taken possession of me, and lives in me by his Spirit, and for thy temptations I shall carry them to Christ, and sure I am thou canst not live in his presence, for he hath overcome thee for me, and he will destroy thee in me." Thus the Spirit changes a soul from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, and is made to live in this light, which is the light of God's reconciled countenance in the face of Christ; and in this vision of God in Christ the soul is changed into the image of Christ from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord. {II Cor.3:18}

This spiritual man as he lives upon God in the spirit, so he worships God in the Spirit; he knows neither the Mount, nor Jerusalem as his place to worship in; he only knows Christ as the proper medium to worship God in, and he knows not Christ after the flesh neither, but after the spirit; his feasting is with God and upon God, and he knows no form or figure, nor externals to make him a rest of, for he can only rest in the bosom of God and Christ; he knows no fellowship but with the Father and the Son, and as he enjoys God and Christ in the saints, so he hath sweet fellowship with them. God is both the light and the life of his worship; his way and his end in his worship. This is a dove that can rest nowhere but in the ark; Church fellowship to him without Christ, is no more than a selected piece of a sunken world; the ordinances, {if Christ be not in them,} is to him but as the grave. When Christ was risen all his inquiries are, "where is he whom my soul loves?" "Show me Christ in a saint, Christ in an assembly, and Christ in an ordinance, and then you show me my life, and upon this ground I can live and die with you," saith he. This soul can measure all men and things by Christ; but Christ by nothing but himself, that Spirit of Christ which dwelleth in him; and thus you have some weak discourses of a spiritual saint. Oh let us stand in that liberty with which Christ hath made us free; we can stand in none but in Christ, and that is the freeness of Grace, that we should stand forever spotless and blameless in the sight of God through him. Oh then, if the glory and honor of God in Christ be dear to us, how can we that are delivered from sin live any longer thereto. It is impossible that we can love Christ and sin too; and therefore where Christ lives by his love he constrains the death of sin. The exhortations is to saints to live in the Spirit; and that is, trampling upon all below God and Christ, and behold ourselves heirs of that glory, and co-heirs with Christ in that glory that is God and Christ to all eternity.