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ZANCHIUS ON SAVING FAITH

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DURING the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries there were several Italian scholars who made valuable and lasting contributions to the progress of Reformed theology. The best known of these is Francis Turretin whose major theological work served as the basis for instruction in systematic theology at Princeton Theological Seminary prior to the publication of Charles Hodge's three volumes in 1871-1872. Less well known, but by no means a minor figure is Girolamo Zanchi (Zanchius) whose collected works fill three large folio volumes, very little of which has been translated into English. If Zanchi is known at all, it is usually for his elaboration of the doctrines of predestination and the perseverance of the saints.

Zanchi was born in 1516, and after his expulsion from Italy because of his adherence to the Reformation cause, he labored in Strassburg where he came into conflict with the Lutheran, Marbach, on several points of doctrine, but especially with reference to perseverance.¹ Eventually he was called to Heidelberg (1568) where he succeeded Ursin in delivering the regular course of theological lectures, thereby relieving the overworked chief author of the Heidelberg Catechism for concentration on other aspects of his duties. When in 1576 Heidelberg was forced to revert to Lutheranism for a brief period, Zanchi went with several of his colleagues to Neustadt, some 25 miles distant, where he continued to teach. He died in Heidelberg in 1590 while visiting the city after the restoration of the Reformed faith.

Attention has once again been drawn to the theological sig-

¹ On this conflict, see Jürgen Moltmann, *Prädestination und Perseveranz: Geschichte und Bedeutung der reformierten Lehre 'de perseverantia sanctorum'* (Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag, 1961), Chapter III, and the briefer discussion in G. C. Berkouwer, *Faith and Perseverance* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1958), pp. 55ff.

nificance of Zanchi in a study by Otto Gründler dealing with his doctrine of God and its significance for his doctrine of predestination.² This study, published in German, was earlier submitted in English to the faculty of Princeton Theological Seminary as a doctoral dissertation under the title, *Thomism and Calvinism in the Theology of Girolamo Zanchi (1516-1590)*.³ The English title suggests the thesis Gründler is seeking to establish, namely, that the theology of Calvin represents a distinct break from the Aristotelian Thomism of Roman Catholic theology which preceded him, but that Zanchi represents a reversion to Thomism and therefore a significant turning point in the transition from Reformation to decadent orthodoxy in Reformed theology. Gründler seeks to establish his thesis by comparing Zanchi with Calvin on the doctrines of God, providence, and predestination, and by comparing both with Thomas Aquinas.

It is not the purpose of what follows to deal at length with Gründler's thesis as a whole, but rather to focus more narrowly on the doctrine of faith in Zanchi to which Gründler devotes significant attention in the first part of his book under the general heading, "The Knowledge of God." This discussion includes two sections, the first dealing with the object of faith, and the second with the nature of faith. In what follows we will note the conclusions to which Gründler comes in each of these areas and seek to evaluate them in the light of the evidence to which he appeals.

With respect to the object of faith, Gründler discovers that for Zanchi it is "the whole Scripture, law and Gospel."⁴ "As divine instruction of, [sic] all things that are necessary for salvation, the whole Scripture, as a body of revealed truth, is the object of faith in Zanchi's view."⁵ He continues in the next paragraph, "In unequivocal terms faith, or the act of faith, is de-

² Otto Gründler, *Die Gotteslehre Girolami Zanchis und ihre Bedeutung für seine Lehre von der Prädestination* (Neukirchen: Neukirchener Verlag, 1965).

³ This 1961 dissertation is published on demand by University Microfilms, Inc., Ann Arbor, Michigan. References and quotations will be according to the English text with page numbers for the German text given in parentheses.

⁴ Gründler, *op. cit.*, p. 57 (49).

⁵ *Ibid.* (48).

scribed as assent to the propositions of the entire body of Scripture as the true Word of God."⁶

This view of the object of faith which centers on the Bible as revealed truth is said to contrast sharply with the view of Calvin for whom "Scripture is not the exact object of faith."⁷ Gründler does, of course, acknowledge that for Calvin faith rests in the veracity of God whenever and wherever God speaks; but it is the gospel, or the promise of mercy, and therefore Christ who is the specific object of faith. Gründler aligns himself with the views of his theological mentor, E. A. Dowey, in stating as Calvin's view that, "although faith believes every word of Scripture, it cannot be identified with the acceptance of whatever God says, but has as its specific and proper object the promise of God's mercy in Jesus Christ."⁸

The difference between Zanchi and Calvin is therefore summarized in the two words, "christocentric" and "bibliocentric." Calvin's view of the object of faith is said to be "strongly christocentric," whereas Zanchi's is a bibliocentric position of a kind characteristic of post-Reformation Reformed orthodoxy.⁹

The evidence to which Gründler appeals in support of these conclusions consists almost entirely of three citations from the works of Zanchi.

The first of these is from a single sentence paragraph in which Zanchi offers a full but complex description of his conception of saving faith. The paragraph is part of a chapter on faith which serves to introduce a discussion of the perseverance of the saints in faith. An adequate impression can be gained only as we look at the whole paragraph.

Faith, therefore, is a virtue or power, and that living and perpetual, freely infused into the hearts of the elect, that is, our hearts, by the Father, on account of Christ, through the Holy Spirit, by which, having been persuaded that what is proposed in the prophetic and apostolic writings is the Word of God, we receive that whole word, both the law and the gospel, as the true Word of God with an undoubted and constant assent: and we receive it in such a way that through the law we truly acknowledge our sins, we sense the wrath of

⁶ *Ibid.* (49).

⁷ *Ibid.*, p. 60 (51).

⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 62 (52).

⁹ *Ibid.*

God, despair concerning our own powers, and are furnished with a genuine longing for the Mediator to take away our sins, appease the wrath of God, and in turn supply us with the strength to avoid sin; and through the gospel we truly acknowledge that Jesus is the true Christ, God and man, only Redeemer, and along with the Father and the Holy Spirit of each, our Savior, and that he is such forever, and thus acknowledged we embrace him; and with all trust and hope concerning the remission of sins, salvation, and life eternal, established and fixed in him alone, we call upon him in our needs; and continually influenced by love for him we are also continuously devoted to a zeal for doing his law, and that both in order that his name might continuously be glorified by us and that we might declare ourselves to be the true sons of God by continuous obedience; and finally that we might lead as many of the elect as we are able, to Christ, not only by speaking, but also by the holiness of the whole of our lives, and that we might strengthen those who have been led to Christ more and more in their faith in him.

This is my description of faith; it is a full description put together out of all its causes and principal effects.¹⁰

10 "Fides igitur est virtus, seu vis, eaque viva et perpetua: a Patre, propter Christum, per Spiritum sanctum in corda electorum, hoc est, nostra gratis infusa: qua persuasi, id quod proponitur in scriptis Prophetis et Apostolicis, esse verbum Dei: illud totum, tam Legem, quam Evangelium, ut verum Dei verbum, indubitato et constanti assensu recipimus, atque ita recipimus, ut et per Legem peccata nostra vere agnoscamus, iram Dei sentiamus, de viribus nostris desperemus: et solido Mediatoris, qui peccata nostra tollat, iram Dei placet, viresque ad peccata deinceps vitanda, et Legem Dei servandam, nobis suppetit, desiderio adiciamur: et per Evangelium, Iesum verum esse Christum, Deum ac hominem, unicum redemptorem, ac una cum Patre, et sancto utriusque Spiritu, servatorem nostrum, eumque perpetuum, vere agnoscamus, et agniti amplectamur: omnique fiducia et spe de remissione peccatorum, salute et vita aeterna, in eo solo collocata atque defixa, in nostris necessitatibus invocemus: et perpetuo illius amore affecti, perpetuo etiam in Legis eius faciendae studium incumbamus: idque tum, ut ipsius nomen perpetuo per nos glorificetur: tum ut nos veros esse Dei filios perpetua obedientia declaremus: tum denique, ut quotquot possumus electos, non solum lingua, sed etiam totius vitae nostrae sanctitate, ad Christum adducamus: et adductos, magis ac magis in illius fide confirmemus.

"Haec est mea fidei descriptio: eaque plena, conflata ex omnibus suis causis et praecipuis effectis." Girolamo Zanchi, *Operum Theologicorum D. Hieronymi Zanchii*, 111 (Excudebant Petrus Albertus et Stephanus Gamonetus, 1613), Tom. 7, Part 1, Col. 352. The translations of Zanchi are by N. S. except where noted.

In view of this description, it is beyond question, as Gründler maintains, that Zanchi regards the whole Bible, both the prophets and the apostles, both the law and the gospel, as the object of faith. Zanchi clearly says that the elect are persuaded of its truth and receive the entire word. In an elaboration of this definition Zanchi speaks of the law and the gospel as the word of God, "the material of faith."¹¹

Zanchi's conception of faith is indeed bibliocentric, but it is not merely bibliocentric. Just because faith has as its object the Bible, faith in the conception of Zanchi is also christocentric. This is made abundantly evident by the fact that the way in which the Bible is received is as much an essential part of the definition of faith as is the fact that the Bible is received at all. Indeed, in this description, Zanchi devotes twice as much space to elaborating the *how*, as he does to describing the fact. Zanchi says that the law furnishes the elect with a genuine longing for the Mediator to take away sins; the gospel reveals Jesus as the true Savior, God and man in one person.¹² Even more pointedly, having acknowledged Jesus to be what the Word of God declares him to be, faith embraces him as such. Just because the Bible is the object of faith, Jesus Christ is the object of faith, for it is the office of faith to lay hold upon Christ and to join the believer to Christ.¹³

Further, the assurance which arises from true faith is fixed in Christ alone; and the love which is coupled with faith gives

11 "Totum, tam Legem, quam Evangelium. Haec est materia fidei circa quam versatur. Non enim solum Evangelium, sed etiam Legem fides credit esse verbum Dei: et tam Legem, quam Evangelium recipit, atque amplectitur." *Ibid.*, Col. 353.

12 The fact that Zanchi acknowledges Christ along with the Father and the Spirit who is the Spirit of the Father and the Son, to be our Savior would also warrant speaking of his conception of faith as "theocentric."

13 "Ad insitionem in Christo faciendam, communionemque promovendam, utitur quidem Spiritus sanctus externis organis, verbo Evangelii et Sacramentis: sed nisi Fides, qua Christum cum eius thesauris nobis oblatum amplectamur, in nobis per eundem Spiritum excitetur, organa illa nihil nobis ad salutem prodesse, consistemur." Zanchi, *op. cit.*, Tom. 8, Col. 522. Gründler makes no reference to this paragraph which speaks of faith as that "by which we embrace Christ offered to us with his treasures" although it immediately precedes a paragraph to which he does make an important appeal.

rise to a zeal for good works, that the name of Christ might be glorified and that the elect might be led to Christ and have their faith strengthened. The invocation of Christ and a zeal to glorify him, as *effects* of faith, confirm the Christ-centered character of it. Zanchi lists a knowledge of sin and a sense of the wrath of God against it as among the *special* effects of faith; but the *principal* effects of faith are a knowledge of Christ and receiving him as Redeemer for justification and sanctification.¹⁴

It is obvious that the term "bibliocentric" as *opposed* to "christocentric" is not appropriate to describe saving faith as to its object in the view of Zanchi. This kind of dilemma is alien both to his intention and express statement. Gründler has made his case seem plausible to his readers by selective use of evidence and by discounting what tends to negate his thesis. In the description of faith translated above, Gründler has furnished his reader with only the first third of the paragraph, as far as the words, "with an undoubted and constant assent." An ellipsis is indicated and the words appended, "This is my description of faith."¹⁵ The net result is to leave the impression that Zanchi conceived of faith only as assent to revealed truths.

The same kind of selectivity is at work in the second passage of Zanchi to which Gründler appeals. It is found in a confession which Zanchi drew up for family use toward the end of his life. In the following translation the words which Gründler does not furnish to his reader are italicized:

By the word faith, moreover, we understand *not some human opinion or persuasion concerning God and Christ, but the gift of divine wisdom and prudence aroused in our hearts by the Holy Spirit from the hearing of the word (Eph. 1:8), by which, assenting with a sincere, firm, and constant mind, on account of the authority of God speaking, to the whole word of God revealed in Sacred Scripture, but most of all to the Gospel bearing the joyful news of redemption accomplished through Christ,*¹⁶ we truly recognize, assuredly know, and lovingly embrace God in it, and the will of God, Christ the Mediator and his benefits; and with a firm confidence con-

¹⁴ "specialia effecta fidei . . . praecipua effecta fidei." *Ibid.*, Tom. 7, Part 1, Col. 353.

¹⁵ Gründler, *op. cit.*, p. 57 (48).

¹⁶ Gründler does refer to "the good news of redemption accomplished through Christ" in the course of his brief discussion of the passage.

*cerning the mercy of God and immense love toward us, we call upon him; we are inflamed to love him in return; and we are driven constantly to offer him faithful obedience, to glorify him with good works and deeds of love toward our neighbors up to the end of our lives.*¹⁷

When Gründler says of this passage that the special mention made of the Gospel "in no way weakens the emphasis on the total canon as the object of faith," he is correct. But it is also true that the same emphasis makes it impossible to discount the centrality of Christ for faith. In the same context Zanchi says that faith embraces Christ and that the Holy Spirit uses the word as a means by which to offer Christ.¹⁸ *Faith does not simply assent to the Bible.* The grammatical construction of the paragraph under discussion suggests, if anything, that this assent is subordinate (and essential) to embracing God as Savior in Jesus Christ, as well as to enjoying the assurance and fulfilling the obligations which arise from faith.

In the third citation offered by Gründler, Zanchi writes that "the intellect, through the light of faith, understands, assents to, and believes the things proposed by the Word, which the will, affected by faith, loves, wills and embraces as good."¹⁹ Again it is obvious that Zanchi does indeed regard the Bible and "the things proposed," the truths it teaches, as objects of faith. This aspect of his teaching need not be suppressed or minimized for it is essential to the genius of his position. But among "the things proposed" we cannot omit to recognize the pre-

¹⁷ "Nominem autem Fidei, non humanam quandam opinionem, aut persuasionem de Deo, et de Christo: sed donum divinae sapientiae, atque prudentiae, per Spiritum sanctum in cordibus nostris, ex auditu verbi excitatum intelligimus: Eph. 1.8. quo cum toti verbo Dei in sacris literis revelato, tum vero maxime Evangelio, laetum nuntium de redemptione per Christum facta, afferenti: sincero, firmo, et constanti animo, propter auctoritatem loquentis Dei, assentientes, Deum in illo, Deique voluntatem, Christum Mediatorem, eiusque beneficia vere intelligimus: certe novimus: peramanter complectimur: firmaque fiducia de Dei misericordia, amoreque erga nos immenso concepta, cum invocamus: ad eum reclamandum accendimur: atque ad fidele obsequium illi praestandum: eumque bonis operibus, et caritatis erga proximum officiis glorificandum, in finem usque vitae constanter impellimur." Zanchi, *op. cit.*, Tom. 8, Col. 522.

¹⁸ See n. 13 above.

¹⁹ Gründler, *op. cit.*, p. 59 (50, Latin untranslated). Trans. by O.G. The passage is found in Zanchi, *op. cit.*, Tom. 8, Col. 578.

presence of Christ himself The statement quoted does not have independent significance but is offered by Zanchi in the context of a series of observations on the Confession, and must be read in the light of the chapter on faith to which it is appended. This chapter speaks of Christ offered to us with his treasures.²⁰ It also speaks of the loving embrace of God and of his will, the loving embrace of Christ the Mediator and his benefits. In the view of Zanchi, saving faith does not receive "things proposed by the word" without receiving Christ offered by the Spirit in the Word.

When we appreciate adequately both the bibliocentric and the christocentric character of faith as to its object in the view of Zanchi, we have narrowed considerably the supposed distance between him and Calvin as representatives, respectively, of Orthodoxy and Reformation. The distance is further narrowed when Calvin's understanding of the Bible as the object of faith is allowed to function freely in an assessment of his views. Gründler does more justice to the scriptural focus of faith in Calvin than he does to the soteric focus in Zanchi by citing passages which bear directly upon the high estimate which Calvin entertained of the Bible as the object of faith. However, these citations appear in a context of what can best be described as reluctant concession. For example, Gründler observes that "although Calvin does not deny that faith 'subscribes to the veracity of God whenever, wherever and in whatever manner he speaks,' he declares the gratuitous promise, the promise of mercy (*gratuita promissio, misericordiae promissio*) the real foundation of faith."²¹

Calvin himself is much more vigorous and positive in laying the foundation for faith.

"First, we must remember, that there is an inseparable relation between faith and the word, and that these can no more be disconnected from each other than rays of light from the sun. . . . The same word is the basis on which it rests and is sustained. Declining from it, it falls. Take away the word, therefore, and no faith will remain. . . . We now see, therefore, that faith is the knowledge of the divine will in regard to us, as ascertained from his word. And the foundation of

²⁰ See n. 13 above.

²¹ Gründler, *op. cit.*, p. 60 (51).

it is a previous persuasion of the truth of God. So long as your mind entertains any misgivings as to the certainty of the word, its authority will be weak and dubious or rather it will have no authority at all. Nor is it sufficient to believe that God is true, and cannot lie or deceive, unless you feel firmly persuaded that every word which proceeds from him is sacred, inviolable truth."²²

When Calvin goes on in the same context to say, "At the same time, we deny not that it is the office of faith to assent to the truth of God whenever, whatever, and in whatever way he speaks: we are only inquiring what faith can find in the word of God to lean and rest upon,"²³ he is not moving beyond the word to what Gründler calls a "real foundation of faith," as though the foundation laid in the Bible were somehow less real, or weak, or even faulty. That suggestion contradicts Calvin's express language. His point is rather that the word speaks also of the wrath of God against sin, and "when conscience sees only wrath and indignation, how can it but tremble and be afraid? and how can it avoid shunning the God whom it thus dreads?"²⁴ Therefore faith seeks the mercy of God, the gospel of Christ "to lean and rest upon." Calvin says that "faith embraces Christ as he is offered by the Father,"²⁵ and that "the true knowledge of Christ consists in receiving him as he is offered by the Father — namely, as invested with his Gospel."²⁶

Gründler is quite right in accenting the christocentric character of faith in Calvin, but he fails to do justice to the fact that faith is christocentric just because it is bibliocentric. The question which Calvin posed was not simply, what can faith find to lean and rest upon, but what can faith find in the word of God to lean and rest upon. Just as with Zanchi, so also for Calvin, "bibliocentric" and "christocentric" are not the poles of a dilemma, but mutually complementary terms which unfold the breadth and richness of the biblical conception of faith.

As we compare the views of Zanchi and Calvin with respect to the object of faith, what is striking is not the divergence but

²² John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, trans. Henry Beveridge (2 vols.; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1957), III/2/6.

²³ *Ibid.*, III/2/7.

²⁴ *Ibid.*

²⁵ *Ibid.*, III/2/8.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, III/2/6.

²⁷ *the measure of convergence*
 the measure of convergence. Both speak first of a persuasion of the truth of God as that comes to expression in the Word of God and of the assent of the believer to that truth. Both speak of the knowledge of God and of his will which faith entertains. Both find the focus of Scripture in the revelation of the gospel and of Jesus Christ concerning whom the gospel speaks. Both describe faith as embracing Jesus Christ giving rise to assurance of salvation and sanctification of life. One could hardly expect two vigorous minds to use precisely the same wording to convey precisely the same nuances. Without suppressing the diversity, therefore, we may readily affirm that the theological conception of the object of faith in Zanchi and Calvin is shared in common. Faith receives Holy Scripture as the truth of God and embraces Jesus Christ whose word it is and of whom the word speaks.

Following the discussion of the object of faith, Gründler proceeds to a consideration of the nature of faith. Here he finds an even wider separation between Zanchi and Calvin. Zanchi is said to hold the view that faith is an infused habit or virtue out of which arises the act of faith, while Calvin's conception of faith is that of certainty or assurance, including certainty of knowledge (*illuminatio*), but more than that, personal assurance of salvation and trust in God's mercy (*fiducia*).²⁷ On the related matter of perseverance, Zanchi is described as finding it in the perpetuity of the infused habit, whereas, for Calvin, Christ and his intercession account for perseverance.²⁸

It must be readily acknowledged that there are obvious differences in the ways in which Zanchi and Calvin describe the nature of faith. Zanchi consciously and deliberately employs the scholastic terminology of infused habit and act. Calvin does not characteristically speak in this way. Even more striking is the fact noted by Gründler, that Zanchi expressly differs from those who, like Calvin, speak of trust (*fiducia*) as the essence of faith.²⁹

At the same time, we must also note that Zanchi can describe faith without employing the scholastic terminology of habit and act. In his formal definition of faith in the work on the perse-

verance of the saints, he does not mention "habit" and "act," but speaks rather of an infused virtue or power by which the elect receive the Word of God and embrace the Christ of Scripture.³⁰ In the elaboration of this description, however, Zanchi does appeal to the distinction between "habit" and "act" and carefully expounds this terminology seeking to show how the Scripture requires this kind of distinction, although it does not make it explicitly.³¹ The terminology of "habit" and "act" is altogether absent from his Confession.³² Instead, Zanchi consciously employs biblical terminology and speaks of the "gift of divine wisdom and prudence," with express appeal to Ephesians 1:8. It is essential, therefore, to understand the truth Zanchi is seeking to express with the terminology employed.

The habit of faith is simply the power or the ability to believe. It is said to be infused because the capacity to believe unto the salvation of one's soul is not something natural to fallen man, nor can it arise spontaneously within the human heart even with some external assistance. Zanchi says it is not a human opinion or persuasion concerning God and Christ, but a gift of the Holy Spirit.³³ The term "infused" is after the biblical pattern of the Spirit's outpouring of love. Against the Pelagians, Zanchi asserts that faith does not arise from free will, but is the gift of the Spirit, poured out in our hearts as is the love of God.³⁴ Because the Holy Spirit does not repeatedly give and withdraw this power to believe, Zanchi also stresses the perpetuity of the gift.³⁵ It is both living and lasting. Infused power or habit simply means for Zanchi that the Holy Spirit bestows the lasting gift of faith.

This idea is certainly not alien to Calvin's understanding of the nature of faith, and he frequently brings it to expression by means of the term "illumination." Illumination is for Calvin the work of the Holy Spirit, indeed, the free gift of the Holy Spirit. Illumination means that the Holy Spirit not only functions as teacher of his own word, but creates the capacity to receive the

²⁷ Gründler, *op. cit.*, pp. 63-69 (53-58).

²⁸ *Ibid.*, pp. 70-72 (59-60).

²⁹ *Ibid.*, pp. 68f. (57).

³⁰ See n. 10 above.

³¹ Zanchi, *op. cit.*, Tom. 7, Part 1, Col. 348.

³² See n. 17 above.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ Zanchi, *op. cit.*, Tom. 7, Part 1, Col. 353.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, Cols. 349-352.

word "And in what is the method of this hearing and learning? It is when the Spirit, with a wondrous and special energy, forms the ear to hear and the mind to understand."³⁶ Calvin speaks repeatedly of new eyes, new ears, and a new heart which are given that men might perceive and know Christ.³⁷ Calvin is simply bringing to expression the same truth which Zanchi presents with terms infused virtue or power. Later theology will use the language of regeneration for the same purpose.

But for neither Zanchi nor Calvin is faith simply a capacity to believe: faith is believing. The passages previously referred to in the discussion of the object of faith make abundantly clear that in faith there is an active receiving of the truth of God and of the God of truth. Both men say that faith embraces Christ.³⁸ Thus Zanchi speaks of the act of faith which cannot be isolated from the habit of faith. There are not two faiths, but simply faith, the power of believing. This conception of faith is not alien to the teaching of Calvin but follows a pattern already discernible in Calvin. This is evident when Gründler summarizes as the view of Calvin: "Illumination is the inward gift of the Spirit enabling the elect to accept and receive the external manifestation of revelation through Scripture and preaching."³⁹ Gründler has expounded the view of Calvin in the same way that Zanchi expounds his own view, namely, by distinguishing between power or habit ("inward gift of the Spirit enabling") and act ("to accept and receive").

It appears, therefore, that as with the object of faith, so also with the nature of faith, the distance between Zanchi and Calvin is not as great as the difference between the terminology of illumination/trust and habit/act might initially suggest. This conclusion will of course, have consequences for Gründler's thesis "that Zanchi's view represents a conscious and clear return to the Thomistic understanding of faith as an infused habit and

³⁶ Calvin, *op. cit.*, II/2/20.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, c.g., III/2/34; 24/1, 2, 13.

³⁸ Calvin: "fides Christum amplectatur." Joannes Calvinus, *Opera Selecta*, ed. P. Barth and G. Niesel, IV (Monachii: Chr. Kaiser, 1931) 18 (*Institutes*, III/2/8). Zanchi: "fides . . . qua . . . Christum . . . amplectamur." Zanchi, *op. cit.*, Tom. 7, Part 1, Col. 352.

³⁹ Gründler, *op. cit.*, pp. 63f. (53).

virtue, a supernatural quality by which we believe."⁴⁰ Both Calvin and Zanchi recognize faith to be the gift of the Spirit: Calvin calls it the illumination of the Spirit; and Zanchi, a power infused by the Spirit. Both understand the act of faith as embracing not only the revealed truth concerning Christ, but Christ together with all his benefits.

We must also note that both men acknowledge assurance of faith and of salvation (*fiducia*) to be inseparable from the act of faith. In his formal definition, Zanchi proceeds immediately from the embrace of Christ to the invocation of Christ arising from trust (*fiducia*) concerning pardon of sin and eternal life. This assurance is said to be grounded in Christ alone.⁴¹ Faith and confidence belong invariably together;⁴² nevertheless, Zanchi is unwilling to identify the two. Specifically he is unwilling to define faith as trust.⁴³ In this, as noted previously, he is conscious of departing from the view of Calvin, but only in a formal sense. Zanchi says that he does not disapprove of this view (i.e., of Calvin and others)⁴⁴ but finds a more biblical way of stating it.⁴⁵ In terms of the triad, gift/act/assurance, Zanchi defines faith as gift/act, whereas Calvin, in his brief definition at the end of Book III, Chapter 2, Section 7 of the *Institutes* defines faith in terms of assurance of faith.⁴⁶ In separating from Calvin at this point, Zanchi expresses himself deferentially and appeals to the authority of Bucer. The difference between Zanchi and Calvin is not unimportant and is one laden with significant prac-

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 69 (58).

⁴¹ See n.10 above.

⁴² Et licet fiducia nunquam a vera fide separetur." Zanchi, *op. cit.*, Tom. 7, Part 1, Col. 354.

⁴³ "Non sum autem secutus definitionem quorundam doctissimorum virorum, qui sic definiunt fidem, ut eam dicant esse fiduciam misericordiae promissae propter Filium Dei." *Ibid.*

⁴⁴ "Quoniam licet hanc definitionem non improbem: plena tamen non est." *Ibid.*

⁴⁵ Zanchi finds that *fides* corresponds to the biblical *πίστις*, and *fiducia*, to the biblical *μετάνοια*. *Ibid.*

⁴⁶ "We shall now have a full definition of faith if we say that it is a firm and sure knowledge of the divine favour toward us, founded on the truth of a free promise in Christ, and revealed to our minds, and sealed on our hearts, by the Holy Spirit." Calvin, *op. cit.*, III/2/7.

et al consequences,⁴⁷ but Zanchi is not conscious of introducing a novelty. He finds the distinction already within the generation of the Reformers.

With respect to the lasting character of true and living faith, an area of special interest for Zanchi, Gründler finds that this perpetuity is tied to the notion of infused habit. It is the infusion of the supernatural quality of faith which guarantees perseverance. For Calvin, on the other hand, it is God, through Christ's intercession, who is the guardian and preserver of faith; and ultimately the believer's union with Christ guarantees the continuity of faith.⁴⁸ "This strictly christocentric basis for the continuity of faith that we find in Calvin, has been clearly abandoned by Zanchi, for whom the *perpetuitas* of faith becomes a divinely infused habit, a supernatural *qualitas* inhering within the believer."⁴⁹

There appears to be reason, however, for maintaining that the high ground occupied by Calvin, as described by Gründler, has not been quite so "clearly abandoned" as he asserts. To be sure, Zanchi does make much of the fact that the infused virtue or power is both living and lasting; but Gründler has not produced the evidence to show that "the *perpetuitas* of faith becomes a divinely infused habit" in the sense that the perpetuity of faith arises from and is dependent upon the infusion of the habit of faith in isolation from other considerations. Zanchi does say that justifying faith must be permanent; temporary faith does not justify.⁵⁰ In saying this, he is saying nothing other than what Gründler correctly reports as Calvin's view.⁵¹ For Calvin also, the gift of new eyes, new ears, and a new heart is a permanent, lasting gift of the Spirit. However, the fact that the infused power of believing is lasting does not yet establish that it is lasting *because* it is infused power.

Zanchi has not left us in the dark concerning the reason for the abiding character of faith just in those areas of his work on

⁴⁷ It is the characteristic difference, for example, between the definitions of faith given in the Heidelberg Catechism, Q. and A. 21, and the Westminster Confession, Chapter XIV.

⁴⁸ Gründler, *op. cit.*, pp. 71f. (59f.).

⁴⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 72 (60).

⁵⁰ Zanchi, *op. cit.*, Tom. 7, Part 1, Col. 349.

⁵¹ Gründler, *op. cit.*, p. 70 (59).

perseverance and in his confession with which we have been dealing. Toward the end of his introductory chapter on faith and immediately prior to undertaking the specific topic of perseverance, Zanchi writes by way of transition:

This is the faith I am discussing when I speak of faith, and especially in this question concerning the perseverance of the saints in faith, from which, I contend, the saints never utterly fall away, because they do not wholly lose that root, that is, the virtue or infused power which some call habit, others, seed on account of the word of God which abides, nor do they ever get rid of its fruits entirely, since God preserves both it and them perpetually in them [*i.e.*, in the saints] on account of his promise and the intercession and merit of Christ.⁵²

Here Zanchi clearly affirms as his view that the gift of faith abides because God preserves it together with its fruits, and He does so in fidelity to his promise and in response to the merit and intercession of Christ. The formula Zanchi has used at this point is remarkably similar to the following description Gründler gives of Calvin's view: "The constancy or perpetuity of faith consists in that God himself, through Christ's intercession, is the guardian and preserver of our faith, even in the midst of sin and temptation. Faith will persevere in the elect, no matter what doubts befall them, because man is held by God, who is faithful to his promise."⁵³

Finally, no less for Zanchi than for Calvin, union and communion with Christ is the context of perseverance in faith. For both, faith joins the believer indissolubly to Christ. Zanchi confesses faith to be essential for union with Christ and participation in his benefits.⁵⁴ Only as the believer is joined to Christ can he be saved; hence perseverance in faith cannot be outside

⁵² "De hac fide mihi sermo est, cum loquor de fide, et praesertim in hac quaestione de perseverantia Sanctorum in fide, a qua contendo sanctos nunquam penitus excidere: quia neque radicem ipsam, hoc est, virtutem, seu vim infusam, quam alii vocant habitum, alii semen, propter verbum Dei, quod retinet, prorsus amittunt: neque omnes eius fructus unquam penitus excutunt: Deo, et illam et istos perpetuo in eis conservante, propter suam promissionem, et Christi precationem, atque meritum." Zanchi, *op. cit.*, Tom. 7, Part 1, Col. 354. Gründler makes no mention of this paragraph.

⁵³ Gründler, *op. cit.*, p. 71 (59).

⁵⁴ See n.13 above.

of the context of that union. The connection is made explicit by Zanchi when he says that election in Christ, and the Holy Spirit and therefore faith in Christ, are the two indissoluble bonds between us and Christ.⁵⁵ He proceeds:

Once the elect have been given faith and have been truly ingrafted into Christ by the Holy Spirit, they cannot wholly lose faith, get rid of the Holy Spirit entirely, or fall away from Christ utterly; and that is so both because of the promise of God and the intercession of Christ.⁵⁶

Moltmann states Zanchi's view succinctly, "Nicht in sich selber, sondern in Christus bleiben die Gläubigen bewahrt."⁵⁷

The conclusion to which we must come with respect to the nature of faith is similar to the one drawn with respect to the object of faith. There are differences between Zanchi and Calvin, but these are encompassed within the common conception of the nature and object of faith shared by these theologians. Saving faith is an abiding gift of the Holy Spirit by which believers lay hold upon Christ and his benefits for eternal salvation. Assurance is the invariable accompaniment of this faith (Calvin defines faith in terms of assurance) and is coupled with perseverance in faith in and through Christ.

It is worth noting that with this conception we are not far removed from the teaching of Chapter XIV of the Westminster Confession on the subject, "Of Saving Faith." The chapter has three divisions which correspond broadly to concern with the nature of faith, with the object of faith, and with perseverance and assurance. Instead of illumination or infused power, the first section speaks simply of "the grace of faith, whereby the elect are enabled to believe to the saving of their souls" as the work of the Holy Spirit. With Calvin and Zanchi, Section 2 affirms that Christian faith believes to be true whatsoever is revealed in the word on the authority of God speaking therein. This is not a purely formal faith; for the believer obeys the commands, he trembles at the threatenings, and he embraces the

promises of God both for this life and the life to come. But also with Calvin and Zanchi, the Confession states that "the principal acts of saving faith are accepting, receiving, and resting upon Christ alone for justification, sanctification, and eternal life, by virtue of the covenant of grace." Neither Calvin nor Zanchi have anything more christocentric than this, and it is christocentric just because it is biblical.

Both perseverance and assurance, at least a basic assurance, are ascribed to saving faith in the third section. The full discussion of these topics is postponed until after the chapters on Repentance and Good Works in order to avoid all the more clearly the pitfalls of carnal security and presumption; but Section 3 itself confesses the final victory and full assurance to be "through Christ, who is both the author and finisher of our faith."

Broadly speaking, the tendency of much modern Reformed theology is to seek respectability for a radical departure from orthodoxy by means of an appeal to the Reformers, and to find in classic Reformed theology a rapid deterioration of Reformed principles. The work of Gründler on the relation between Calvin and Zanchi is in line with this tendency. There are, of course, differences between the Reformers and the later classic authors, and the attempt to isolate those differences is a major undertaking. The sheer bulk of primary source material ought to caution any researcher against reaching premature and ill-founded conclusions. At the same time, it is essential to the integrity of this project that the modern tendency not control, but rather be controlled and where required, be corrected by the research.

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⁵⁵ Zanchi, *op. cit.*, Tom. 7, Part 1, Cols. 63f.

⁵⁶ "Electi semel vera fide donati, Christoque per Spiritum sanctum vere insiti, fidem prorsus amittere, Spiritum sanctum omnino excutere, et a Christo excidere penitus non possunt: idque tum propter promissionem Dei, tum propter Christi precationem." *Ibid.*, Col. 64.

⁵⁷ Moltmann, *op. cit.*, p. 92.