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Calvin Versus Osiander

On Justification

JAMES WEIS

IN HIS FINAL edition of the *Institutes* (1559) John Calvin expressed his strong disagreement with the Lutheran theologian, Andreas Osiander, on the doctrine of justification and on the definition of the *imago Dei*. Calvin's dispute with Osiander on these issues might seem somewhat one-sided, since Osiander had been dead several years when Calvin wrote his major refutation of Osiander's theology on these points. Osiander, however, for several years prior to the outbreak of the controversy over the doctrine of justification, had been very critical of the doctrine of the Lord's Supper which was held by the Swiss reformers—and also by Calvin.¹ Furthermore, the Osiandrian controversy, which had been sparked by Osiander's disputation on justification at the University of Königsberg in 1550, was still a very live issue among Protestant theologians ten years later when Calvin was writing the final edition of the *Institutes*.

The relationship between Calvin and Osiander prior to the outbreak of the controversy had not been a happy one. As early as 1540, at the Colloquy in Worms, which Calvin had attended as a representative of the city of Strassburg and the Dukes of Lüneburg and which Osiander had attended as a representative of the city of Nuremberg, Calvin had been negatively impressed by Osiander's boorish behavior.² In the next few years Calvin occasionally took notice of the writings by Osiander—always with displeasure.³

Osiander on Justification

Andreas Osiander had become a parish priest in Nuremberg in 1522 and had espoused the cause of the Reformation from the beginning. His commitment to the Reformation is reflected in his participation in various official meetings and colloquies during his years as a pastor in Nuremberg (Marburg, 1529; Augsburg, 1530; Smalcald, 1537; Hagenau and Worms, 1540). When the compromises reached between Protestants and Roman Catholics in the Augsburg Interim were introduced in Nuremberg in 1548, he resigned in protest. Early in 1549 he arrived in Königsberg where, thanks to the kindness of Count Albrecht of Prussia, he served as a pastor. By April, 1549, he had been made a professor on the theological faculty of the University of Königsberg—in spite of the fact that he had no advanced academic degree.⁴ In a disputation held here on October 24, 1550, on the doctrine of justification, he maintained many of the ideas which during the remaining two years

of his life were to involve him in heated controversy. He maintained that

“In Christ the whole fulness of God dwells, and consequently also in those in whom Christ dwells,”⁵ and that “We are righteous by his essential righteousness.”⁶

This formal disputation was apparently not the occasion of the sudden appearance of a newly formulated concept of justification. Already in the summer of 1549 there had been conflict between Osiander and his fellow professors in Königsberg over this doctrine. By August, Melanchthon was explicitly criticising Osiander on this point.⁷ This conflict, although doubtless genuinely based on differences in theological conviction, was aggravated by the tensions which had followed Osiander's sudden rise in the academic ranks of the University of Königsberg as well as by Osiander's rejection of the interim which in Saxony had been accepted by Melanchthon and several other Saxon reformers. So great did the tension become in Königsberg that for a time the professors are said to have carried firearms to their classes.⁸

Within a few months the controversy spread throughout Germany, so that when Osiander presented his *Disputatio de Justificatione* in 1550, he was merely presenting formally ideas which he had espoused and defended for over a year.

During the next two years Osiander published a large number of tracts and two major books in defense of his position. He was opposed by treatises from the pens of his colleague, Moerlin, Philip Melanchthon, Matthias Flacius, and many others. Flacius published no less than twelve pamphlets and books against Osiander during this period.⁹

The Osiandrian controversy was complicated by the introduction of a totally opposite point of view by Francesco Stancarus, a former Italian priest, who in 1551 spent a few months on the faculty in Königsberg. While there he took issue with Osiander's exaltation of the divine nature of Christ in justification and instead claimed that

Christ, God and man, is Mediator only according to the other nature, namely the human, not according to the divine; Christ made satisfaction for us according to His human nature, but not according to His divine nature; according to His divine nature Christ was not under the Law, was not obedient unto death, etc.¹⁰

Not only Osiander, but Melanchthon, Calvin, and virtually every other contemporary Protestant theologian took issue with Stancarus. The same paragraph of the Formula of Concord which addressed itself to the issues raised in the Osiandrian controversy also addressed itself to and rejected the theological views of Stancarus on Justification.¹¹

The heat of the Osiandrian controversy is reflected in a contemporary anti-Osiandrian chorale which complained, "The serpent's family is on the move; Osi and his cohorts are publishing in English!" and concluded with the admonition, "Pray, do penance, repent, lest, with shame, Osi find a place for himself in every land."¹² This controversy was presumed to have been settled within Lutheranism by the formulation and acceptance of the third article of the Formula of Concord.¹³

Whether, as some have suggested, Osiander harbored his unique ideas on justification throughout his career as a pastor in Nuremberg,¹⁴ or whether he first developed these ideas in Königsberg in 1549, it is clear that he desired to grapple with and to solve some of the basic problems connected with the doctrine of justification. It was and is easy for his opponents to accuse him of exalting the merits of man in justification,¹⁵ but it seems likely that he was more concerned about exalting the responsibility of the justified man. That the theological details of the dispute were somewhat ambiguous is suggested by the fact that no less a Lutheran reformer than Johann Brenz was unwilling to reject absolutely Osiander's understanding of justification.¹⁶

Osiander was apparently concerned to emphasize the change which Christian faith makes in the life of the believer. Instead of laying stress on the imputation of the righteousness of Christ to the believer, Osiander stressed the righteousness of the Christian man in whom Christ dwells. His opponents he accused of teaching doctrines "colder than ice, that we are accounted righteous only on account of the righteousness of the Christ dwelling in us by faith. God is not indeed so unjust as to regard him as righteous in whom there is really nothing of true righteousness."¹⁷

Osiander's doctrines of man, creation, and the fall are closely connected to his understanding of the atonement and justification. According to Osiander the divine image in which man was created was really constituted in the Son of God. Hence Adam, when he was created, was created not only according to the pattern of the future incarnate Son of God, but with the Son of God dwelling in him.¹⁸ The consequence of the fall into sin was the loss of this divine image—that is, the loss of the essential indwelling of the Son of God according to His divine nature. The function of the Son of God as Mediator was to restore this lost divine image to fallen man. As Mediator it was Christ's task to bear in man's place the penalty which the law imposed upon man who had transgressed against it. The Mediator, as Redeemer, became incarnate. He would have become incarnate even had man not fallen into sin, in order to become the head of the human family which would have been bearing His image. Since man had fallen into sin, however, the function of the Mediator was extended to provide a redemptive satisfaction for the punishment incurred by fallen man's transgression of the law. Furthermore the Mediator as Redeemer fulfilled

the law perfectly in the stead of fallen man, since man, even when redeemed, would be unable perfectly to obey the law. This redemptive activity of the Mediator Osiander understood to have been accomplished by the historical Christ during the time of His life on earth. This redemption of fallen man by the Mediator, according to Osiander, has made possible the justification of fallen man in subsequent generations. Redemption, so to speak, constitutes the objective forgiveness of sinful man and the reconciliation of sinful man to God. The consequence of this possibility of reconciliation, when it is effected in an individual human being, constitutes what Osiander called justification—that is, the indwelling of the divine nature of Christ in a man.¹⁹

It is at this point that Osiander's concept of justification can begin to make sense, for justification involves not merely the imputation of Christ's righteousness to a fallen man by which he is forgiven, but rather involves the transformation of a fallen man by the indwelling in him of the Son of God according to His divine nature. This indwelling is not conceived apart from faith, but is the immediate consequence of faith. According to Osiander,

if the question be asked what is righteousness, one must answer: Christ dwelling in us by faith is our Righteousness according to His divinity; and the forgiveness of sins, which is not Christ Himself, but merited by Christ, is a preparation and cause that God offers us His righteousness which He is Himself.²⁰

This concept of justification has implications also for the doctrine of Christology, for the personal union of the divine and human natures of Christ in the whole work of redemption comes into question. Still, in all fairness to Osiander, it must be noted that while he conceived of the indwelling of Christ as being according to His divine nature, yet when he discussed this in one of his defensive writings, he spoke paradoxically—if not ambiguously—of Christ according to the personal union and also according to the divine nature only.

Christ, true God and man, dwelling in us through faith, is our Righteousness according to His divine nature, as Dr. Luther says: "I rely on the righteousness which is God Himself; this He cannot reject."²¹

Nevertheless, in the eyes of Osiander as well as of his critics, one of the crucial features of his concept of justification centered on his explicit assertion that the indwelling Christ is present only according to His divine nature and not according to His human nature.

If the question be asked according to what nature Christ, His whole undivided person, is our Righteousness, then, just as when one asks according to what nature He is the Creator of heaven and earth, the clear, correct, and plain answer is that

He is our Righteousness according to His divine, and not according to His human nature, although we are unable to find, obtain, or apprehend such divine righteousness apart from His humanity.²²

This emphasis on the indwelling Christ in the believer according to His divine nature involved, according to Osiander, also the indwelling of the Father and the Holy Ghost.

For of what help would it be to you if you had all the righteousness which men and angels can imagine, but lacked this eternal righteousness which is itself the Son of God, according to His divine nature, with the Father and the Holy Ghost? For no other righteousness can lift you up to heaven and bring you to the Father. But when you apprehend this righteousness through faith, and Christ is in you, what can you then be lacking which you do not possess richly, superabundantly, and infinitely in His deity?²³

In consequence of the indwelling of Christ in the believer the divine image, lost through the fall of man, is restored. This restoration of the divine image brings with it the possibility of obedience to the will of God. Though sin may still cling to the believer, it is, according to Osiander, present as "an impure drop compared with a whole pure ocean, and, on account of Christ's righteousness which is within us, God will not regard it."²⁴

From this brief overview of Osiander's teaching on justification, it seems evident that he was particularly concerned to discuss this doctrine in such a way as to exalt the implications of the redemptive work of Christ for the life of the believer and to remind the believer of his responsibility of obedience to the will of God in the light of the presence of the indwelling Christ within him.

Osiander's teaching on justification may be briefly summed up in the following excerpt from one of his writings:

This, however, is true and undoubted that by the fulfillment of the Law and by His suffering and death He merited and earned from God, His heavenly Father, this great and superabounding grace, namely, that He not only has forgiven our sin and taken from us the unbearable burden of the Law, but that He also *wishes to justify us by faith* in Christ, to infuse [*eingiessen*] *justification or the righteousness*, . . . and, if only we obey, through the operation of His Holy Spirit and through the death of Christ, in which we are embodied by the baptism of Christ, *to mortify, purge out and entirely destroy sin* which is already forgiven us, but nevertheless still dwells in our flesh and adheres to us. Therefore the *other part* of the office of our dear faithful Lord and Mediator Jesus Christ is now to turn toward us in order to deal also with us poor sinners, as with the guilty party, that we acknowledge such

great grace and gratefully receive it by faith, *in order that He by faith may make us alive and just from the death of sin, and that sin, which is already forgiven, but nevertheless still dwells and inheres in our flesh, may be altogether mortified and destroyed in us. And this, first of all, is the act of our justification.*²⁵

Calvin on Justification

John Calvin, who, as already noted, had only unpleasant associations with the name of Osiander, became aware of the controversy over the teaching of Osiander on justification, which was being waged among the followers of Luther in Germany, through a letter from Franciscus Dryander of March 12, 1551. Dryander had become aware of the controversy through a letter from Philip Melancthon and sent this letter along to Calvin. Besides bemoaning the controversy and the position espoused by Osiander, Dryander suggested to Calvin that he consider opposing Osiander on the points in controversy.²⁶ Shortly afterwards Calvin published a short exposition on the Osiandrian controversy in which he expressed his disapproval of Osiander's distinctive teachings on justification.²⁷ At about this time, late in the spring of 1551, in a letter to Farel lamenting the death of Bucer, Calvin also noted his continued displeasure with Osiander.²⁸ A year later he received word from Dryander that the Osiandrian controversy had been complicated by Stancarus' introduction of an equally bad opposite point of view.²⁹ In 1552 Calvin remarked about the unhappy state of division within Christendom in a letter to Thomas Cranmer, whose wife was the niece of Osiander. In spite of this connection between Cranmer and Osiander, Calvin wrote rather heatedly of the damage Osiander was doing to the church through the disruptive ideas which he was propagating: "It is only too well known how, with his insane ideas, Osiander is making himself the object of scorn and causing trouble for many other people."³⁰ Calvin's dislike of Osiander and the peculiar doctrines he stood for, is reflected in a letter of 1558 to Pierre Toussaint in which he deplored being categorized by some Lutherans with Osiander and Schwenkfeld.³¹ When his final Latin edition of the *Institutes* appeared in the following year, Calvin included among that edition's many revisions and additions extensive sections refuting what he understood to be the doctrinal errors of Osiander.³²

The doctrine of justification, the definition of which was at stake in the Osiandrian controversy and in Calvin's refutation of Osiander's views on justification, was viewed by both Roman Catholics and the Reformers as the key issue in the Protestant Reformation. Prior to the emergence of the Osiandrian controversy, which introduced some new factors into the exposition of justification by the Protestant Reformers, Calvin had usually discussed justification most extensively in the context of writings polemically directed against the Roman Catholic Church and its teaching on justifica-

tion. In a public letter to Cardinal Sadeleto in 1539, written in response to a letter from Sadeleto to the people of Geneva in which Sadeleto had attempted to woo them back into submission to the Roman Catholic Church, Calvin called "justification by faith the first and keenest subject of controversy between us."³³ He proceeded,

I will briefly explain to you how we speak on this subject. First, we bid a man begin by examining himself, and this not in a superficial and perfunctory manner, but to sist [sic] his conscience before the tribunal of God, and when sufficiently convinced of his iniquity, to reflect on the strictness of the sentence pronounced on all sinners. . . . Then we show that the only haven of safety is in the mercy of God, as manifested in Christ. . . . We deny that good works have any share in justification, but we claim full authority for them in the lives of the righteous.³⁴

In a tract written in 1544 to lay before Charles V an explanation and defense of the reform movement, Calvin again commented extensively on justification. It is interesting to note that Calvin here preceded his discussion of justification with a discussion of repentance just as he was to do in the *Institutes* a few years later. Dividing "the knowledge of our salvation" into three stages, Calvin noted that

First, we must begin with a sense of individual wretchedness, filling us with despondency as if we were spiritually dead. . . . From this he should rise to the second stage. This he does when, animated by the knowledge of Christ, he again begins to breathe. . . . From this stage also he must rise to the third, when instructed in the grace of Christ, and in the fruits of his death and resurrection, he rests in him with firm and solid confidence, . . .³⁵

From this Calvin proceeded to justification, which he called the most keenly contested point under consideration.³⁶ Calvin's objection to the Roman Catholic understanding of justification is succinctly stated:

We condemn the error which enjoins men to have more respect to their own works than to Christ, as a means of rendering God propitious, of meriting His favour, and obtaining the inheritance of eternal life; in short, as a means of becoming righteous in His sight.³⁷

A few years later Calvin again wrote on justification, this time even more extensively than before, in a refutation of several of the early decrees and canons of the Council of Trent, among which were those of the sixth session which dealt with the doctrine of justification. In his remarks which prefaced a point by point discussion

of the canons and decrees on justification, Calvin charged the Council fathers with merely perpetuating "the trite dogma of the schools: that men are justified partly by the grace of God and partly by their own works; thus only showing themselves somewhat more modest than Pelagius was."³⁸ Calvin remarked that although he would not normally quibble about a word,³⁹ the definition of justification was in this case particularly crucial since Calvin understood it to be synonymous with the forgiveness of sins, while the fathers of Trent understood it to include both renovation and sanctification.⁴⁰ The dispute, according to Calvin, involved not only the definition of the word but also the definition of the cause of justification.

The Fathers of Trent pretend that it is twofold, as if we were justified partly by forgiveness of sins and partly by spiritual regeneration; or, to express their views in other words, as if our righteousness were composed partly of imputation, partly of quality. I maintain that it is one, and simple, and is wholly included in the gratuitous acceptance of God. I besides hold that it is without us, because we are righteous in Christ only.⁴¹

In the *Institutes* of 1559 Calvin discussed even more extensively the doctrine of justification. After discussing in great detail faith and repentance, Calvin presented his exposition of justification. The benefits which the Christian has through faith in Christ rest upon the imputation to him of the righteousness of Christ. The same general definitions already noted were presented with renewed clarity. Justification may be summed up in the phrase, "we are reckoned righteous before God in Christ and apart from ourselves."⁴² The legal flavor of the word justification is reflected in Calvin's definition of it: "'to justify' means nothing else than to acquit of guilt him who was accused, as if his innocence were confirmed. Therefore, since God justifies us by the intercession of Christ, he absolves us not by the confirmation of our own innocence but by the imputation of righteousness, so that we who are not righteous in ourselves may be reckoned as such in Christ."⁴³ In a word, "it is plainly understood as absolution."⁴⁴ The renewed relationship between God and man which is established by justification is summed up in the word "acceptance." "We explain justification simply as the acceptance with which God receives us into his favor as righteous men. And we say that it consists in the remission of sins and the imputation of Christ's righteousness."⁴⁵ By participating through faith in the grace of God in Christ the believer receives "a double grace: namely, that being reconciled to God through Christ's blamelessness [justification], we may have in heaven instead of a judge a gracious Father; and secondly, that sanctified by Christ's spirit we may cultivate blamelessness and purity of life [repentance]."⁴⁶

It is important to bear in mind that among the benefits which Calvin included among those bestowed upon the justified believer are (1) the mystical union between the believer and Christ—the "indwelling of Christ in our hearts" being balanced by "[the be-

liever's being] engrafted into his [Christ's] body"⁴⁷—, and (2) the restoration of the divine image in the believer.⁴⁸

Calvin's Refutation of Osiander

Although Calvin declared Osiander's view of justification to be a "wild dream"⁴⁹ it is apparent from a comparison between Calvin's description of the benefits of justification and Osiander's definition of justification that the differences between them were in many ways not excessively great. As the contemporary Calvin scholar, Wilhelm Niesel, has noted, "Calvin sieht, dass Osiander in der Rechtfertigungslehre ein ganz ähnliches Anliegen vertritt wie er selbst."⁵⁰ In fact, Osiander even explicitly attributed all credit to God for the infusion of Christ's essence in the believer.⁵¹

In many ways the disagreement between Calvin and Osiander on justification was remarkably similar to that between Calvin and the Council of Trent on this same doctrine. In fact, after describing Osiander's teaching on justification, Calvin's first approach in refuting it was to raise the question of the proper definition—perhaps the proper scope—of the word justification. Contrary to Calvin's more limited definition of justification—clearly distinguished from regeneration—Osiander, according to Calvin, extended

the noun "righteousness" and the verb "to justify" . . . in two directions: so that to be justified is not only to be reconciled to God through free pardon but also to be made righteous, and righteousness is not a free imputation but the holiness and uprightness that the essence of God, dwelling in us, inspires. Secondly, he sharply states that Christ is himself our righteousness, not in so far as he, by expiating sins as Priest, appeased the Father on our behalf, but as he is eternal God and life.⁵²

Calvin acknowledged that Osiander's attempt to prove the mystical union between Christ and the believer was not in itself bad. It was in Osiander's attempt to explicate the nature of this bond of union—a union which Calvin believed easily capable of explanation in the light of "the secret power of the Spirit"—that Calvin detected the origin of Osiander's presumed misunderstanding of justification, for Osiander defined this union as the essential indwelling of Christ according to His divine nature in the believer.⁵³ Calvin believed that from Osiander's "desire to transfuse the essence of God into men . . . arises another fiction of his, that Adam was formed to the image of God because Christ had already been destined as the prototype of human nature before the fall."⁵⁴ Calvin discussed Osiander's doctrine of the image of God in an earlier chapter of the *Institutes*. Here he disputed Osiander's contention that not only the soul but both body and soul are the seat of the divine image and asserted instead that the soul is the seat of the image.⁵⁵ Hence Calvin was unwilling to acknowledge the prior necessity of the in-

carnation—regardless of whether or not there had been a fall—in order to fulfill the creation of man who, according to Osiander, had been created—body and soul—according to the image which the Son of God was to assume at the time of His incarnation.⁵⁶ Furthermore, Calvin asserted that “when Paul discussed the restoration of the image, it is clear that we should infer from his words that man is made to conform to God not by an inflowing of substance, but by the grace and power of the Spirit.”⁵⁷

Calvin suggested that Osiander’s peculiar ideas on justification might be traced to Osiander’s failure to understand the Scriptures. By improperly understanding “justify” to mean “made righteous” Calvin suggested that Osiander not only laid a false basis for his doctrine of justification but also “proves himself an incompetent interpreter.”⁵⁸

Calvin objected primarily to two principal features of Osiander’s doctrine of justification: (1) Christ is our righteousness only according to His divine nature, and (2) Christ is essentially united with the justified believer.

Calvin correctly understood Osiander to be maintaining that “since Christ is God and man, he is made righteousness for us with respect to his divine nature, not his human nature.”⁵⁹ Calvin recognized this to be an undermining of Christ’s mediatorial activity. “If Osiander should object that this work, by its very excellence, surpasses human nature, and for this reason can be ascribed only to divine nature, I grant the first point; in the second I say he is grossly deluded.”⁶⁰ Calvin understood the implication to be that Osiander “obviously deprives Christ’s human nature of the office of justifying.”⁶¹ Calvin’s simple answer to Osiander on this matter was: “we steadfastly hold that in Christ’s death and resurrection there is righteousness and life for us.”⁶²

Calvin’s concern was that Osiander concede and agree “that we are justified in Christ, in so far as he was made an atoning sacrifice for us: something that does not comport with his divine nature.”⁶³ If this redemptive and justifying activity of Christ be granted, Calvin asserted his readiness to grant that Christ justifies us as both God and man, and that this work is also the common task of the Father and the Holy Spirit. Finally, in the context of these modifying considerations, Calvin conceded the propriety of the statement: “that righteousness of which Christ makes us partakers with himself is the eternal righteousness of the eternal God.”⁶⁴

Having established the mediatorial activity of Christ, according to both natures, underlying justification, Calvin devoted his strongest critique to Osiander’s idea of the believer’s essential union with Christ. Calvin had no objection to the teaching that the believer is united in a special union with Christ. He even described the faith of believers thus: “by faith we come empty to him to make room for his grace in order that he may fill us.”⁶⁵ Osiander, however, described the essential righteousness imparted to the Christian

by the indwelling Christ in such a way as to confuse regeneration with justification. Such confusion removes the absolute certainty of forgiveness in Christ and suggests that forgiveness is contingent not only upon the righteousness of Christ but also upon the obedience of the regenerated believer.⁶⁶ Osiander conceived of justification and regeneration as two aspects of the righteousness of the believer—"double righteousness."⁶⁷ Calvin was referring to Osiander's mixture of justification and regeneration when he wrote:

the doctrine of justification is perverted and overthrown when doubt is thrust into men's minds, when the assurance of salvation is shaken and the free and fearless calling upon God suffers hindrance—nay, when peace and tranquility with spiritual joy are not established.⁶⁸

Because Osiander asserted that this essential righteousness of the believer comes from God and carries with it no merit, he could not be accused of distorting justification along specifically Pelagian lines. Calvin, however, believed that Osiander's teaching on justification would lead people to look within themselves—to the indwelling essential righteousness within themselves—for the certainty of their salvation. It is this pastoral concern for the confidence and tranquility of the believer that Calvin reflected at both the beginning and the end of his lengthy refutation of Osiander's doctrine of justification. At the beginning he wrote:

unless we would knowingly and willingly allow that righteousness to be snatched from us which alone gives us the confidence to glory in our salvation, we must bitterly resist [Osiander].⁶⁹

Summing up his refutation of Osiander, Calvin in a similar vein wrote:

In short, whoever wraps up two kinds of righteousness in order that miserable souls may not repose wholly in God's mere mercy, crowns Christ in mockery with a wreath of thorns.⁷⁰

A few chapters after his chapter on justification, Calvin, in his chapter on Christian freedom, repeated his concern for a proper distinction between justification and regeneration.

For since, as we have elsewhere shown, the law leaves no one righteous, either it excludes us from all hope of justification or we ought to be freed from it, and in such a way, indeed, that no account is taken of works. For he who thinks that in order to obtain righteousness he ought to bring some trifle of works is incapable of determining their measure and limit but makes himself debtor to the whole law. Removing, then, mention of law, and laying aside all consideration of works, we should, when justification is being discussed, embrace God's mercy alone, turn our attention from ourselves, and look only

to Christ. For there the question is not how we may become righteous but how, being unrighteous and unworthy, we may be reckoned righteous. If consciences wish to attain any certainty in this matter, they ought to give no place to the law.⁷¹

The difference between Osiander's and Calvin's understanding of justification is most clearly seen in Calvin's careful distinction between justification and regeneration versus Osiander's fusion of the two under the term justification.

There seems to be no profound change or development of Calvin's definition of justification when, for instance, his earlier discussions of justification are compared with his discussion of it in the 1559 edition of the *Institutes* in the context of his refutation of Osiander. Rather, Calvin's definition of justification, which had been sharpened in the context of his (and all the other reformers') controversy with the Roman Catholic Church on the subject, maintained its same emphasis on the distinction between justification and regeneration in the context of his dispute with Osiander's confusion of the two.

It is ironic that Osiander left Nuremberg in protest over what he understood to be a concession to the Roman Catholics on the doctrine of justification in the Augsburg Interim, when he actually was holding—or quickly came to hold—a concept of justification much more closely approximating that held by the Roman Catholic theologians than that held by the Lutheran theologians—among them Melancthon—who participated in the drawing up the terms of the Augsburg Interim.

Osiander's idea of "essential righteousness" lent itself readily to the Eucharistic controversies of the day. Osiander, according to Calvin, "maliciously calls 'Zwinglian' all those who do not subscribe to his mad view of 'essential righteousness' because they do not hold the view that Christ is eaten in substance in the Lord's Supper."⁷² In 1557, two years before the publication of the final edition of the *Institutes* in which the preceding remark was made, Calvin, in his "Last Admonition to Joachim Westphal," had spoken only defensively against the charge of affinity with Osiander.⁷³ In the 1559 *Institutes* Calvin became more pointedly critical of the implications of Osiander's theology for the doctrine of the Lord's Supper.

Osiander, by spurning this spiritual bond, forces a gross mingling of Christ with believers. And for this reason, he maliciously calls "Zwinglian" all those who do not subscribe to his mad error of "essential righteousness" because they do not hold the view that Christ is eaten in substance in the Lord's Supper. . . . The fact, then, that he insists so violently upon essential righteousness and essential indwelling of Christ in us has this result: first, he holds that God pours himself into us as a gross mixture, just as he fancies a physical eating in the Lord's Supper.⁷⁴

By 1561, in a tract directed against Tileman Heshusius, who, like Westphal, had charged Calvin with an improper doctrine of the Lord's Supper, Calvin more pointedly denied Heshusius' accusation against him of being Osiandrian in his Eucharistic theology. Calvin responded:

In the Second Book [of the *Institutes*] I had refuted, as I suppose, with no less perspicuity than care, the fiction of Osiander, which he falsely accuses me with following. Osiander imagined that righteousness is conferred on us by the Deity of Christ. I showed, on the contrary, that salvation and life are to be sought from the flesh of Christ in which he sanctified himself, and in which he consecrates Baptism and the Supper. It will be there also seen how completely I have disposed of his dream of essential righteousness.⁷⁵

Calvin was evidently quite sensitive to the charge of being Osiandrian in his theology, both before and after the publication of the 1559 edition of the *Institutes*, with its lengthy section devoted to refutations of what Calvin believed to be Osiander's errors. By responding to the theological ideas of Osiander, Calvin was not only able to employ a useful foil in the positive definition of his own understanding of justification, but he was also able to dissociate himself from what was then generally considered to be a theological aberration in Lutheranism with which he was being associated by some of his Lutheran opponents. It would seem not unreasonable to conjecture that Calvin responded negatively to the theology of Osiander not only because it ran counter to his own theology, but also because it gave him a chance to clarify his position in the violently polemical theological area of mid-sixteenth century protestantism—an arena characterized in the words of Philip Melancthon: "God deliver me from the fury of the theologians." The "fury" of Osiander was met by the "fury" of Calvin, and in the process Calvin's definition of justification—in the context of the polemical theological situation of the day—was made proportionately more relevant and perhaps also more precise.

Several years later the theologians who drafted the Formula of Concord also made use of Osiander's teaching on justification as a foil against which they were able to define more clearly and precisely the doctrine of justification as it was to be believed, taught and confessed in the Lutheran Church.

FOOTNOTES

1. Theodoro Beza, "Ioannis Calvini Vita," Johannis Calvini, *Opera Quae Supersunt Omnia*, XXI (*Corpus Reformatorum*, XLIX), (Brunsvigae: Schwetschke, 1879), Col. 137.
2. John Calvin, *Johannes Calvin's Lebenswerk in seinen Briefen* (Neukirchen Kreis Moers: Neukirchener Verlag, 1961), II, 613. Am ersten Tag, an dem ich ihn sah, habe ich den unheiligen Sinn und das hässliche Benehmen dieses Mannes verabscheut. Sooft er einen süßen, edlen Wein loben wollte, führte er den Spruch im Munde: Ich bin, der

ich bin [2. Mose 3, 14], oder: Das ist der Sohn des lebendigen Gottes [Joh. 6, 69]; das verriet doch offenen Spott über Gott. Um so mehr wunderte ich mich stets über die Nachsicht, mit der Ihr alle eine solche Bestie hegtet. Besonders erstaunt war ich, in einer Deiner Vorreden eine Stelle zu lesen, in der er, obwohl er in Worms ein Muster seiner Verrücktheit geliefert, mehr als reichlich mit Lob bedacht war.

3. *Ibid.*, I, 291. "Neulich hat mir ein Kaufmann aus Nürnberg, der hier durchreiste, eine Verteidigungsschrift Osianders gezeigt, über die ich mich für Osiander recht schämte. Wozu war es denn nötig, in jeder dritten Zeile die Zwinglianer zu reizen und Zwingli selbst so unfreundlich herzuzunehmen, ja nicht einmal den heiligen Knecht Gottes Oekolampad zu schonen? Wenn er uns den doch nur halb wiedergeben könnte! Das wäre mir wahrhaftig viel mehr wert. Ich verlange ja gar nicht von ihm, stillschweigend zuzugeben, dass einer ungestraft seine Ehre angriff, aber ich hätte gern gesehen, er hätte sich der Beschimpfung von Männern enthalten, deren Andenken alle Frommen in Ehren halten müssten. Ebenso wie mir daher die Frechheit des Menschen missfällt, durch dessen Verse Osiander sich als beschimpft ansieht, ebenso wünschte ich an ihm Mässigung, Klugheit und gesunden Verstand! Guter Gott, welches fröliche Schauspiel bieten wir den Papisten!"
4. *Concordia Triglotta*, Edited by F. Bente and W. H. T. Dau, (St. Louis: Concordia, 1921), 153. Cf. Philip Schaff, *History of the Christian Church*, VII (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1910), 570.
5. G. J. Planck, *Geschichte der protestantischen Theologie* . . . (Leipzig: Crusius, 1796), 271.
6. *Loc. cit.*
7. Emanuel Hirsch, *Die Theologie des Andreas Osiander* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1919), 176.
8. Philip Schaff, *Creeeds of Christendom*, I (New York: Harper, 1919), 273.
9. *Concordia Triglotta*, *op. cit.*, 154.
10. *Ibid.*, 159.
11. "Formula of Concord, Epitome," Article III. *The Book of Concord*, edited by Theodore Tappert (Philadelphia: Muhlenberg, 1959), 472-475.
12. Hirsch, *op. cit.*, 291.
13. "Formula of Concord, Epitome," *op. cit.*, III, pp. 472-475.
14. *Concordia Triglotta*, *op. cit.*, 152 f.
15. *Ibid.*, 152 ff.
16. *Ibid.*, 157. "And as to Brenz, who put a milder construction on the statements of Osiander, Melancthon wrote October 1, 1557: 'Concerning the affair with Osiander, my writings are publicly known, which I hope will be of benefit to many. Brenz also is agreed with us doctrinally. He said he had advised peace, for he did not take Osiander's expressions to be as dangerous as the opponents did, and for this reason could not as yet condemn his person; but in doctrine he was agreed with us and would unite in condemning Osiander if the charges made against him were proved.' (C. R. 9, 311, 402)."
17. Reinhold Seeberg, *Textbook of the History of Doctrines*, Translated by Charles Hay, II (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1958), 350. Quoted from Andreas Osiander, *De Justificatione*, 73 f.
18. *Concordia Triglotta*, *op. cit.*, 158. 'God formed the body of man,' says Osiander, 'that it should be altogether like unto the future body of Christ. Thereupon He breathed into it the breath of life, i. e., a rational soul together with the human spirit, adorned with the proper power, in such a manner that it, too, should be like unto the future soul of Christ in everything.' (Frank, II, 104)." Quoted from *An filius Dei fuerit incarnandus*.
19. Seeberg, *op. cit.*, II, 370 ff. Cf. Albrecht Ritschl, *A Critical History of the Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation*, translated by J. S. Black (Edinburgh: Edmonston and Douglas, 1872), 216 ff.,

- and Albrecht Ritschl, "Die Rechtfertigungslehre des Andreas Osiander, *Jahobücher für Deutsche Theologie*, II (1857), 795 ff.
20. *Concordia Triglotta*, *op. cit.*, 156.
 21. *Loc. cit.* Quoted from Osiander's "Wider den Liechtflychtigen Nacht-Raben, der, mit einem einigen Bogen Papiers einen falschen Schein zu machen unterstanden hat, als solt mein Lehr, von der Rechtfertigung des Glaubens, Doctor Luthers seligen Lehr entgegen . . . sein," (Königsberg: den 10. Januar 1552), b4b.
 22. *Concordia Triglotta*, *op. cit.*, 156.
 23. *Loc. cit.*
 24. Seeberg, *op. cit.*, II., 371-372.
 25. *Concordia Triglotta*, *op. cit.*, 156-157.
 26. "Dryander Calvino," Johannis Calvini, *Opera Quae Supersunt Omnia*, XVI, (*Corpus Reformatorum*, XLII), (Brunsvigae: Schwetschke, 1875), col. 76. ". . . Et tamen nactus nuncium volui ad te scribere, ut te salutarem amicissime et mitterem literas quas superioribus diebus accepi a Philippo Melanchthone cum libello Osiandri, in quo videbus hominem vehementis et confidentis spiritus pugnaeque avidum non modo depravare doctrinam ecclesiae, sed etiam bellum iudicare omnibus piis et doctis hominibus qui bene meriti sunt de doctrina religionis. Optat Philippus, sicut videbis, existere aliquem qui non tantum eum coarguat vanitatis, sed etiam tam confidentem hominis audaciam retundat. Et quoniam ingenii tui dexteritatem et doctrinam movit, te in primis nominat ad quem non minus quam ad ipsum res videtur pertinere. Quamvis causa magni momenti, sicut haec est, quum publicam ecclesiae doctrinam attingat, ad singulos etiam religionis amantes pertinere videatur. Peto igitur abs te ut rem diligenter consideres, et in communi ecclesiae causa tantum operis et laboris ponas quantum permittent tuae occupationes et rei dignitas videtur flagitare. Me quoque admonebis de tuo iudicio et voluntate."
 27. Johannis Calvini, "Contra Osiandrum," *Opera Quae Supersunt Omnia* X (*Corpus Reformatorum*, XXXVIII) (Brunsvigae: Schwetschke, 1871), col. 165-167.
 28. "Calvinus Farello," Johannis Calvini, *Opera*, *op. cit.*, XIV, 133. "Osiander prorsus insanit. Colligemus tamen animos, donec confectum sit, quod nobis ad metam usque restat."
 29. "Dyander Calvino," Johannis Calvini, *Opera*, *op. cit.*, XIV, 404. "Accepi heri literas a Philippo Melanchthone quinto die huius mensis scriptas, in quibus significat, post insanias et furores Osiandri senem quandam Italum Stancarum novos tumultus excitare. Contendit enim Christum humana tantum natura esse mediatorem. Punitio Dei summa et maxima est quam in hac aetate nostra videmus et sentimus, auferri a nobis pios et doctos ministros Dei et existere haec portentosa monstra, quae exitius atque interitum toti generi humano allatura videantur. Quum igitur in tauta confusione totius orbis terrae et praesidio humano simus destituti et ignoremus quid nos facere conveniat, sequuti exemplum Iosaphati ad coelum oculos tollimus, teque aeternae et vive Deus propter gloriam nominis tui oramus, ut afflictis rebus opem feras et salutare nobis consilium et praesidium mittas."
 30. John Calvin, *Johannes Calvins Lebenswerk*, *op. cit.*, II, 595.
 31. *Ibid.*, III, 982. "Hättest Du mir selbst die Tür verschlossen, so hätte ich mich ohne Zögern als Vermittler angeboten und Mittel und Wege gesucht, Euren Hader zu stillen; doch Du weisst wohl, wie befremdend gehässig das mich anmuten musste, dass ich mit Osiander, Schwenckfeld und anderen Ketzern zusammengestellt wurde."
 32. John Calvin, *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, I (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1960), 186-192 (I, xv, 3-5), 467-474 (II, xii, 4-7), 729-743 (III, xi, 5-12).
 33. John Calvin, "Reply by John Calvin to Cardinal Sadolet's Letter, *Tracts and Treatises in Defense of the Reformed Faith*, I (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1958), 41.

34. *Ibid.*, 42-43.
35. John Calvin, "The Necessity of Reforming the Church," *Tracts and Treatises in Defense of the Reformed Faith*, I (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1958), 133-134.
36. *Ibid.*, 135. "There is no point which is more keenly contested, none in which our adversaries are more inveterate in their opposition, than that of justification, namely, as to whether we obtain it by faith or by works."
37. *Loc. cit.*
38. John Calvin, "Acts of the Council of Trent with The Antidote," *Tracts and Treatises in Defense of the Reformed Faith*, III (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1958), 108.
39. *Ibid.*, 115.
40. *Ibid.*, 114.
41. *Ibid.*, 116.
42. John Calvin, *Institutes, op. cit.*, I, 729 (III, xi, 4).
43. *Ibid.*, 728 (III, xi, 3). Cf. Wilhelm Niesel, "Calvin wider Osianders Rechtfertigungslehre," *Zeitschrift für Kirchengeschichte*, XLVI (1928), 425.
44. *Loc. cit.*
45. *Ibid.*, 727 (III, xi, 2).
46. *Ibid.*, 725 (III, xi, 1).
47. *Ibid.*, 737 (III, xi, 10).
48. *Ibid.*, 190 (I, xv, 4). "Now God's image is the perfect excellence of human nature which shone in Adam before his defection, but was subsequently so vitiated and almost blotted out that nothing remains after the ruin except what is confused, mutilated, and disease-ridden. Therefore in some part it now is manifest in the elect, in so far as they have been reborn in the spirit; but it will attain its full splendor in heaven." Cf. John Calvin, "Acts of the Council of Trent," *op. cit.*, 143.
49. *Ibid.*, 730 (III, xi, 5).
50. Niesel, "Calvin wider Osianders Rechtfertigungslehre," *op. cit.*, 422.
51. John Calvin, *Institutes, op. cit.*, I, 729-730, (III, xi, 5). Calvin remarks that Osiander, "although not intending to abolish freely given righteousness, . . . has still enveloped it in such a fog as to darken pious minds and deprive them of a lively experience of Christ's grace."
52. *Ibid.*, 731-732 (III, xi, 6).
53. *Ibid.*, 730 (III, xi, 5).
54. *Loc. cit.*
55. *Ibid.*, 189 f. (I, xv, 4).
56. *Ibid.*, 467 (II, xii, 4). "Since all Scripture proclaims that to become our Redeemer he was clothed with flesh, it is too presumptuous to imagine another reason or end."
57. *Ibid.*, 191-192 (I, xv, 5).
58. *Ibid.*, 733 (III, xi, 6).
59. *Ibid.*, 735 (III, xi, 8).
60. *Ibid.*, 735 (III, xi, 9).
61. *Ibid.*, 741 (III, xi, 12).
62. *Ibid.*, 742 (III, xi, 12).
63. *Ibid.*, 736 (III, xi, 9).
64. *Loc. cit.*
65. *Ibid.*, 737 (III, xi, 10).
66. *Ibid.*, 739 (III, xi, 11).
67. *Loc. cit.*
68. *Loc. cit.*
69. *Ibid.*, 731 (III, xi, 6).
70. *Ibid.*, 743 (III, xi, 12). Cf. Wilhelm Niesel, *The Theology of Calvin* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1956), 138-139. "The two things—justification and sanctification—are one in Him but only in Him. The teaching of Calvin that justification and sanctification are two aspects of the same process in our lives, and yet are not to be confused, has nothing at all to do with his gift for dialectics, as has been supposed;

but rather it is deeply grounded in the facts of spiritual experience. It is an indication that in his theology he is concerned to exalt the Mediator Jesus Christ. In this doctrine of justification and sanctification we are not simply faced by the general question: God and man; rather the fact is that here as elsewhere we have to do with God revealed in the flesh."

71. *Ibid.*, 834 (III, xix, 2).
72. *Ibid.*, 737 (III, xi, 10).
73. John Calvin, "Last Admonition to Joachim Westphal," *Tracts and Treatises in Defense of the Reformed Faith*, II (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1958), 488.
74. John Calvin, *Institutes, op cit.*, I, 737 (III, xi, 10).
75. John Calvin, "The True Partaking of the Flesh and Blood of Christ in the Holy Supper in Order to Dissipate the Mists of Tileman Heshusius," *Tracts and Treatises in Defense of the Reformed Faith*, II (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans 1958), 554.