

Robert Kolb / Torbjörn Johansson /
Daniel Johansson (eds.)

Simul

Inquiries into Luther's Experience
of the Christian Life



Academic Studies

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Abbreviations

AEU	<i>Arbeitskreis Evangelischer Unternehmer: 70 Jahre Denkschrift des Freiburger Bonhoeffer-Kreises</i> (Karlsruhe: AEU, 2015)
Ap	Apology of the Augsburg Confession
BC	<i>Book of Concord</i> , ed. Robert Kolb and Timothy J. Wengert (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2000)
BC [1959]	<i>Book of Concord</i> , ed. Theodore Tappert (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1959)
BSELK	<i>Die Bekenntnisschriften der Evangelisch-Lutherischen Kirche</i> , ed. Irene Dingel (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2014)
CA	Augsburg Confession
CR	Philip Melancthon: <i>Corpus Reformatorum. Philippi Melanthonis Opera quae supersunt omnia</i> , ed. C. G. Bretschneider and H. E. Bindweil (Halle/Braunschweig: Schwetschke, 1834–1860)
LC	Large Catechism (Martin Luther)
LW	<i>Luther's Works</i> [American edition], 55+ vols. (Philadelphia: Fortress and St. Louis: Concordia, 1955-)
MBW.R	<i>Melancthons Briefwechsel: Kritische und kommentierte Gesamtausgabe: Regesten</i> , ed. Heinz Scheible (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 1977-)
MBW.T	<i>Melancthons Briefwechsel: Kritische und kommentierte Gesamtausgabe: Texte</i> , ed. Heinz Scheible et al. (Stuttgart-Bad Cannstatt: Frommann-Holzboog, 1991-)
MPG	<i>Patrologiae cursus completus: series Graece</i> , 161 vols. ed. J.-P. Migne (Paris: Petit-Montroye, 1857–1866)
MPL	<i>Patrologiae cursus completus: series Latina</i> , 221 vols. ed. J.-P. Migne (Paris & Turnhout: Gomer Fratres, 1844–1864)
MSA	<i>Melancthons Werke in Auswahl</i> [Studien-Ausgabe], 6 vols. ed. Robert Stupperich (Gütersloh: Bertelsmann, 1955)
SC	Small Catechism (Martin Luther)
SKS	<i>Søren Kierkegaards Skrifter</i> , vol 1–28, vol K1-K28, ed. Niels Jørgen Cappelørn et al. (Copenhagen: Gads forlag, 1997-)
ThWNT	<i>Theologische Wörterbuch zum Neuen Testaments</i> (Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1932–1964)
WA	<i>Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe [Schriften]</i> , 65 vols. (Weimar: Böhlau, 1883–1993)
WA Br	<i>Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe: Briefwechsel</i> , 18 vols. (Weimar: Böhlau, 1930–1985)

Bible Versions:

ESV	English Standard Version
JPS	Jewish Publication Society
NAB	New American Bible
NRSV	New Revised Standard Version
NIV	New International Version

Publishers series are designated by the common scholarly abbreviations when indicated.

Preface

The present volume is born out of the celebrations of the Reformation in 2017 and preparations for the anniversary. The 500th Anniversary of the Reformation challenged us to identify overarching and synoptic elements of Martin Luther's theology. The proposal of this volume is that the concept of *simul* grasps the essence of Luther's theology, *at the same time* (!) as it broadens the perspective and goes beyond the traditional *solus*. *Simul* takes you directly to the heart of Lutheran theology, justification by faith alone, at the same time as the concept constitutes a thought pattern which is a characteristic feature of much of Lutheran theology. An advantage of *simul* is that it includes and does justice to those features of Luther's thinking which touch upon contradictions, paradoxes, and tensions.

The Lutheran School of Theology in Gothenburg devoted four annual conferences to the uses of the concept *simul*, and many of the contributions in the present volume were first presented at these. One of our aims is to pay attention to how *simul* unites systematical-theological, historical, and exegetical perspectives. If *simul* constitutes a Lutheran way of thinking, it should, given its claim to establish all theology in Scripture, be possible to detect a biblical basis for *simul* and the present volume offers some evidence for this.

We would like to acknowledge our gratefulness to the contributors for offering important and versatile perspectives on the topic.

A special thank goes to Marie Persson, secretary at Lutheran School of Theology in Gothenburg, for an extensive work with the manuscripts and proofreading, and Christian Einertson, who prepared the index of names and Bible passages. We are also most grateful to Professor Herman Selderhuis for accepting this volume into the Refo500 Academic Series and to Dr. Izaak de Hulster and Laura Röthele for their work to bring this project to completion.

Introduction

The Simul Dimension of Lutheran Theology

“Qui bene distinguit, bene docet.”¹

(The one who distinguishes well, teaches well.)

This dictum of the *Praeceptor Germaniae*, Philip Melancthon, still urges Lutheran theology to take distinctions, definitions, and concepts of theology most seriously. One concept which has a special place within the Lutheran theology is *simul* (“at the same time,” “simultaneously”). The expression *simul iustus et peccator* has given the *simul* a firm position within the Lutheran dogmatic language concerning justification.

The thesis to be explored in this article is that the *simul* dimension in Lutheran theology is not limited to the doctrine of justification but expresses a trait that can be discerned in many other central doctrines as well.² Our question does not concern the use of the concept, *simul*, but the actual synchronous coexistence of two different objects or principles, the simultaneity of different things, conditions, or aspects. *Simul* describes the relationship between two or more entities. This is important, given the central role of using distinctions in Lutheran theology. How does one make a distinction and not a division? How do the distinguished entities relate to each other? In answering these questions, *simul* is an important conceptual tool.

When trying to explore patterns in Lutheran theology, it is important to keep in mind that, for Luther, theology is interpretation of the Holy Scripture.³ The purpose of this article is therefore *not* to fit all Lutheran theology into a formula of *simul*, but rather to describe this simultaneity as an important dimension of Lutheran theology and to analyze the *function* of simultaneity in various doctrines.

1 CR 13: 569 (*Erotemata dialectices*, 1547).

2 In the dissertation of Kjell-Ove Nilsson, *Simul: Das Miteinander von Göttlichem und Menschlichem in Luthers Theologie* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1966) *simul* is used to sum up the whole of Luther's theology. As the subtitle indicates, Nilsson especially focuses on the communication of attributes (*communicatio idiomatum*), a theme which I will not treat in this article and therefore *simul* is here approached in another way.

3 Cf. Oswald Bayer, *Theology the Lutheran Way*, ed. and trans. Jeffrey G. Silcock and Mark C. Mattes (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2007), 36.

1. Law and Gospel

In Lutheran theology the proper distinction between law and gospel is of utmost importance. Still, it is also of utmost importance that they are not divided in a way which would lead to antinomianism or legalism. They are to be kept together in preaching, and they do their proper work simultaneously. In his analysis of law and gospel, Gerhard Ebeling describes how the distinction (*Unterscheidung*) is “the nerve of theology” in Lutheran theology. He describes the distinction as a *nomen actionis*, in order to keep its dynamic character and show that it cannot be reduced to a dry formula.⁴ Following the tradition of Ebeling, Lutheran theology has been described as an “art of distinction.”⁵

Law and gospel express two truths, two different perspectives on God and man, which need to be voiced at the same time. As important as the distinction between them is, it is equally important to keep them together. The law talks about man and his responsibilities. It accuses him. The gospel talks about God, his deeds and goodness. It brings forgiveness to the sinner. Law and gospel effect man’s conversion to God, which means repentance, caused by the law, and faith, caused by the gospel.

The simultaneity functions as a pattern of thought which lets different perspectives stand side by side. These two truths about man and God form – if they are allowed to sound simultaneously – a tension, even a paradox, to which we will return when the question about predestination is discussed.

2. Justification

The formula *simul iustus et peccator* can be interpreted in different ways, revealing different understandings of justification.⁶ In order to describe the two main alternatives it is helpful to use some of Aristotle’s categories, which he developed to analyze and order reality. Luther had a thorough training in the philosophy of Aristotle, and as a university teacher in Wittenberg he was obliged to lecture on Aristotle’s philosophy.⁷ Although Luther finally breaks free from this philo-

4 Gerhard Ebeling, *Luther: Einführung in sein Denken* (5. ed., Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2006), 122–128.

5 Wilfried Härle, “Gott fürchten und lieben – Martin Luther und die Kunst lebenswichtiger Unterscheidungen,” in *“Nimm und lies!” Theologische Quereinstiege für Neugierige*, ed. Ralf K. Wüstenberg (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 2008), 114.

6 The most extensive study of the theme is Wilhelm Christe, *Gerechte Sünder: Eine Untersuchung zu Martin Luthers “simul iustus et peccator”* (Leipzig: Evangelische Verlagsanstalt, 2014), where a review of previous research is presented.

7 WA 6: 458,17–21, LW 44: 201 (*An den christlichen Adel deutscher Nation von des christlichen Standes Besserung*, 1520).

sophical scheme, it can nevertheless be used to describe how his understanding of justification changed when he discovered the gospel. With the terminology of Aristotle, Luther's new understanding of justification means that he moved from the categories of substance (*substantia*) and quality (*qualitas*) to the category of relationship (*relatio*). If *iustus* is understood as a substance or a quality within man, justification means to be more righteous, or righteous in a more qualified sense, when sin is decreasing and a new quality is increasing. In this process man can be described as *simul iustus et peccator*, since he is partly righteous and partly sinner (*partim-partim*). In medieval theology the assumed process was effected through infused grace (*gratia infusa*), and man was seen in a state of transition. The formula *simul iustus et peccator* can be interpreted according to such a traditional, medieval understanding of justification.⁸

Another picture emerges when one understands that for Luther, justification is a question about relationship (*relatio*). Although something really happens *within* man, which can be described within the categories of substance and quality, the crucial thing is the new *relationship* between God and man in Christ. The human being is described from quite another perspective than the description of his inner qualities. Man is described from the perspective of his relationship to Christ. As long as the focal point is within man, a question about substance and quality comes to the foreground, but if the focal point is man and God together, then the question focuses on *relatio*. Luther can express this fact like this: "Neither does holiness belong to the category of substance but to the category of relationship."⁹

The expression *simul iustus et peccator* then means something else. It is a description of man as he is in himself – *peccator* – and how he is in Christ – *iustus*. The expression is a definition of a relationship in which man is seen as a totality (*totus-totus*). It is through the "joyful exchange," Luther explains, that *simul iustus et peccator* can be possible. This means that Christ takes upon himself the sin of man and gives man his righteousness.¹⁰ As in a marriage husband and wife share everything and hold all in common, so Christ and the believer share sin and righteousness. In baptism man is united with Christ and is no longer supposed to view himself alone, but always together with Christ. As man is in himself, apart from the relationship to Christ, he is and remains a sinner. This is true even if he has walked a long way on the road of sanctification.

According to the *totus homo* view, the *simul iustus et peccator* is a description of a relationship. One can also say that it is a question about perspectives. If God views

8 See e.g., WA 4: 646f. Cf. Oswald Bayer, "Luther's 'Simul Iustus et Peccator'", footnote 7 in the present volume.

9 WA 40,2: 354,2–4 (on Ps 51:4). Cf. Oswald Bayer's comment on this in his article "Luther's 'Simul iustus et peccator'" in the present volume.

10 WA 7: 25,34 (*Von der Freiheit eines Christenmenschen*, 1520).

the believer as he is in himself, he is totally a sinner. If God views him in Christ, he is totally righteous. Expressed in other terminology used by Luther, the distinction of law and gospel means that if God views man from the perspective of the law, he is a sinner. If God views man from the perspective of the gospel, he is righteous.

3. *Simul iustus et peccator*, the Certitude of Salvation and Experience

The question of *simul* plays a crucial role in the development of Luther's theology not least since it is related to the question of the certitude of salvation (*Heilsgewissheit*). As shown by Susan Schreiner, the idea of simultaneity partially or even completely resolves the question about certainty for Luther. If the fact that man is a sinner and the empirical effects of this are no longer a sign that he is not righteous and holy, then he can believe here and now that he is saved for the sake of Christ. Schreiner comments, "Both the reunification of the *Iustitia Christi* with the *Iustitia Dei* and the doctrine of *simul iustus et peccator* had profound consequences for the issue of certitude. By denying that justification was a process, believers could be certain 'now' of their salvation. In particular, the *simul* doctrine meant that the continuing state of sin could no longer threaten one's salvation."¹¹

The very character of faith as trust involves the fact that this faith is certain or at least is struggling for certainty. Faith is clinging to something outside the person himself, God's word of promise in Christ as a *verbum externum*. This assertion, that man is not supposed to look inside but outside himself, carries within it the potential for certainty. With Luther's famous expression in his *Lectures on Galatians* (1535), his theology is certain since "it snatches us away from ourselves and places us outside ourselves [*nos extra nos ponit*], so that we do not depend on our own strength, conscience, experience, person, or works but depend on that which is outside ourselves, that is, on the promise and truth of God, which cannot deceive."¹² Luther describes how his work for a reformation of the church was a struggle against the "monster of uncertainty":

Let us thank God, therefore, that we have been delivered from this monster of uncertainty [*ab hoc monstro incertitudinis*] and that now we can believe for a certainty that the Holy Spirit is crying and issuing that sigh too deep for words in our hearts. And this is our foundation: The gospel commands us to look, not at our own good deeds or perfection but at God himself as he promises, and at Christ himself, the Mediator.¹³

11 Susan Schreiner, *Are You Alone Wise? The Search for Certainty in the Early Modern Era* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 72.

12 WA 40,1: 589, 25–28, LW 26: 387 (*In epistolam S. Pauli ad Galatas Commentarius* [1531] 1535).

13 WA 40,1: 589,15–19, LW 26: 387 (*In epistolam S. Pauli ad Galatas Commentarius* [1531] 1535).

With the terminology mentioned above, Luther is here moving the focus from substance to relationship.

We shall now look closer at the *experience* of justification. What difference does *simul* make from a subjective and an existential point of view? The right understanding of *simul iustus et peccator* has significant consequences for pastoral care and counseling. We find here another kind of *simul*, a simultaneity in the experience which comes to expression in different biblical passages. Paul expresses such a simultaneity with his words “sorrowful, yet always rejoicing,” (2 Cor 6:10) and similarly, “when I am weak, then I am strong” (2 Cor 12:10). Feelings and experiences of a Christian are not black or white, but rather the inner life can contain *both kinds of feelings at the same time*. What might look like paradoxes rather expresses the kind of simultaneity that every believer can experience. An important task for pastoral counseling is to show how that kind of experience is expressed also in the Holy Scriptures.

Man can view himself from different perspectives, from the perspective of the law and the perspective of the gospel, respectively. Luther’s description of the spiritual struggles of the faithful (*Anfechtungen*) can be seen as a struggle between these two perspectives. Faith clings to the word of promise and sticks to it when facing the accusations of the law and the conscience. Also, in the description of spiritual struggles there is a simultaneity of experiences.

4. Holy Scripture as Norm

During the period of Lutheran Orthodoxy it became common to treat the Word of God under two headings, first in the *Prolegomena* and then under the heading “Means of grace.” This distinction is found already in the *Formula of Concord*, where it is first stated that the Holy Scripture is the *regula unica*¹⁴ and later, e.g. in article II, that the Word of God has the *power* to bring new life to man. This distinction was developed in the dogmatic tradition that followed the *Formula*, and we will see how both these aspects of Scripture contain a *simul*.

The classical Lutheran expression of Scripture as norm is found in the very beginning of the *Formula of Concord*: “We believe, teach, and confess that the only rule and guiding principle according to which all teachings and teachers are to be evaluated and judged are the prophetic and apostolic writings of the Old and New Testaments alone [...]”¹⁵ During the sixteenth century this was addressed both against the Roman Catholic view of tradition and against the “enthusiasts”

¹⁴ BSELK, 1216/1217, BC, 486.

¹⁵ BSELK, 1216/1217, BC, 486.

(*Schwärmer*), who claimed that they received revelations directly from the Holy Spirit.

During the seventeenth century new questions and arguments were developed under the heading “Scripture as norm.” Not least the questions raised by natural scientific development and by the Socinians, a pre-Enlightenment movement, led Lutheran Orthodox theologians to develop their ideas on *the relationship between Scripture, faith, and reason*. Facing different movements, scientific or religious, which claimed that reason is the ultimate judge, the Lutheran Orthodox theologians developed ways to define the role and limits of reason. They could build on the work of Luther and Melancthon.

In the disputation *De homine* (1536) Luther operates with two perspectives, which come to expression in the structuring of the disputation in philosophical and theological theses respectively.¹⁶ Matters can be viewed from both perspectives. In the same way reason itself can be evaluated from a philosophical or a theological perspective. On the one hand, reason can be praised as “divine,” as ruler over the arts. On the other hand, it is stressed that reason knows almost nothing about man when it comes to questions of origin and goal. Compared to theology, philosophy knows “almost nothing” about man in these realms.¹⁷ In this way Luther describes man according to two different perspectives.

Melancthon also used different perspectives to describe the free will in *Loci Communes* (1521). He states how the freedom of the will, as it appears in the divine revelation, must be distinguished from how it appears according to “the judgment of nature” (*iudicio naturae*).¹⁸ He argues, of course, that the truth is to be found in Scripture, but it is of interest to notice how Melancthon deals with the natural way of looking at things. It is a way of admitting the tension of different perspectives, which are present simultaneously.

In a similar way, Melancthon reflects on different kinds of criteria (*normae certitudinis*) for knowledge. He describes how reason functions upon the basis of common experience and logic.¹⁹ Quite another criterion is found in the revealed Word of God, which is the highest criterion. According to reason, working from experience, the dead do not return to life. According to faith, building on the revelation of God, the dead will come to life again. In the existing tension, the perspective of faith should always be obeyed and confessed.²⁰

16 WA 39,1: 175–177, LW 34: 137–144.

17 WA 39,1: 175, thesis 11, LW 34: 137.

18 Philipp Melancthon, *Loci Communes 1521, Lateinisch – Deutsch*, ed. Horst Georg Pöhlmann (Gütersloh: Gütersloher Verlagshaus, 1997), 44.

19 Philipp Melancthon, *Liber de anima* (1553), *Humanistische Schriften*, ed. Richard Nürnberger, in: MSA 3: 340f.

20 Philipp Melancthon, *Liber de anima*, 340f.

Reason, then, has its given sphere in relationship to the creation. If reason begins to judge things outside of creation, e.g., the Trinity, it has transgressed its limits. The Lutheran theologian Balthasar Meisner (1587–1626) compares this with a blind man starting to discuss and judge colors.²¹ Facing the high truths of revelation, faith in God and his Word must be allowed to rule over reason.

There are also spheres which normally fall under reason but become spheres of the special revelation. These include the biblical history of God's special deeds on earth, the history of Israel, the life and death of Jesus Christ, the resurrection, etc. Dealing with these questions, Lutheran Orthodoxy argued that reason should be taken captive under faith (cf. 2 Cor 10:5f), which clings to the revelation of God's Word. Consequently, they made clear that there is a tension between the judgment of reason – operating according to its usual principles – and faith, operating with another norm. In this way the view of Scripture led to reflections on theological anthropology and the relationship between reason and faith. There is here a kind of *simul* when it comes to perspectives. One perspective perceives how a thing is seen from reason's normal *modus operandi*, working according to experience and logic. Another perspective perceives how a thing is seen by faith, trusting God's Word. The judgments of both are taken seriously, and oversimplified solutions are avoided. Creation and historical facts in the holy history are viewed from two perspectives – that is the *simul*. However, it must be noted that they do not just establish this tension between faith and reason, but they always give faith and revelation priority over reason. An example can show how the Orthodox theologians were thinking. When Holy Scripture tells us that Jesus Christ walked on water, faith is approving and confessing this although reason cannot confirm it from normal experiences or explain how it happened. Johann Gerhard uses the above mentioned passage in 2 Corinthians 10:5 to motivate readers to hold such a position: “We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ [...]”²²

With regard to rationality, it can of course also be added that given the faith in an almighty God, who can do whatever he wishes in heaven and on earth, it is in accordance with reason to accept described events in what one confesses to be his Word. This is the most rational point of view. What must be clarified is that these events cannot be judged according to the ordinary principles which reason is normally using.

21 Balthasar Meisner, *Brevis consideratio theologiae photinianae* ... (Wittenberg, 1623), 348f.

22 Johann Gerhard, *Loci theologici* [...], *tomus secundus* (Frankfurt/M./ Hamburg, 1657), 4 (De creatione et angelis, caput IV: De ordine creationis, in quo forma ejus consistit, §25).

The term *simul* can thus be used in order to show that the Lutheran tradition operates with two kinds of perspectives, and that the tension remains even if faith and revelation always are given priority.

5. Holy Scripture as Means of Grace

Can *simul* be used to describe the Lutheran position when it comes to the *efficacy* of Scripture? The Lutheran confessions strongly emphasize that the Holy Spirit works *through* external means. *The Augsburg Confession*, article V, says: “For through the Word and the sacraments as through instruments the Holy Spirit is given, who effects faith where and when it pleases God in those who hear the gospel.”²³ The Holy Spirit is working through the *verbum externum*. Through an *external* means of grace an *inner* effect is produced. This is a simultaneity that cannot be dissolved according to the Lutheran Confessions.

Luther encountered different ways to dissolve the simultaneity. He criticized both the enthusiasts and the papacy in *The Smalcald Articles*: “In these matters, which concern the spoken, external Word, it must be firmly maintained that God gives no one his Spirit or grace apart from the external Word which goes before.”²⁴ According to Luther, both the enthusiasts and the papacy dissolve the linkage between the external Word of God and the Holy Spirit. In both cases they claim an inner, spiritual effect without the external Word. The critique against the enthusiasts can also be formulated from the opposite perspective: They do not value the *verbum externum* as they should, just seeing it as an external Word without inner, spiritual effect.

This last assertion, that Scripture is an external Word without the inner, spiritual effect, came to the foreground in a later debate within the Lutheran church. In the beginning of the seventeenth century, the Lutheran pastor Hermann Rahtmann tried to find an answer to the question why so few were converted although many heard the powerful Word of God. His answer was that the Word in itself did not contain power, but this power must be added through the Holy Spirit. Then the external word becomes an internal, spiritual Word. This means that Rahtmann dissolved the unity of the Word and the Spirit, and so also the simultaneity of outer and inner effects, contending that the inner effect is not always there when the Word is preached. The words are only external words until the Spirit comes.²⁵

23 BSELK, 100/101, BC, 41.

24 BSELK, 770/77, BC, 322.

25 For the positions of Rahtmann and Gerhard, see Torbjörn Johansson, “Die Vernunft vor den Mysterien der Heiligen Schrift. Anthropologische Erwägungen zur Bibelhermeneutik der evangelisch-lutherischen Theologie des 17. Jahrhunderts und der Bibelhermeneutik Spinozas,” in *Hebrais-*

Rahtmann's position was severely criticized by almost all the Lutheran Orthodox theologians. The most prominent critique was formulated by Johann Gerhard, who stated that we are not allowed to dissolve the external Word from the internal effects since they are held together in the Holy Scriptures. The answer to Rahtmann's question why not all who hear the external word are led to faith, is, according to Gerhard, to be found in man's freedom and ability to resist the Holy Spirit. Even if the inner, spiritual effect does not lead to conversion, it does not mean that it is not present. The reason why many are not converted is man's evil will.²⁶

To summarize the *simul* aspect of the Word of God as a means of grace, the Lutheran position means that the Word of God meets man as an external and internal event at the same time. The inner effect can never be separated from the external Word.

Reflecting on the use of *simul* to describe the relationship in the means of grace, it becomes clear that we here have to do with another kind of description than in the cases above (justification and the Word as norm). The *simul* is in this third case more of a secondary description. The relationship between externality and internality can be more clearly described in other ways, e.g. with the prepositions "in, with and under," or with the term *unio* (see the Lord's supper below). While the *simul* leaves open the possibility for different interpretations, e.g. a "parallel" effect, *simul* can be called a secondary description of the relationship. We find the same phenomenon in the doctrine of baptism, to which we now turn.

6. Baptism

Luther's exposition of baptism in *The Small Catechism* emphasizes that it is water "enclosed in God's command and connected with God's Word" which "brings about forgiveness of sins, redeems from death and the devil, and gives eternal salvation to all who believe it."²⁷ In contrast to Reformed theology, baptism in water and baptism in the Holy Spirit are held tightly together. Although both sides could use the word "sign" as a description of the sacraments, they meant different things by it. In the Augsburg Confession, article XIII, Melancthon compares signs which are used so that people can recognize Christians outwardly, and signs which witness

tik-Hermeneutik-Homiletik: Die "Philologia Sacra" im frühneuzeitlichen Bibelstudium, ed. Christoph Bultmann und Lutz Danneberg (Berlin/Boston: de Gruyter, 2011), 413–440; here 418–422.

²⁶ Johann Gerhard: *Von der Natur, Krafft und Wirkung des geoffenbarten und geschriebenen Worts Gottes in Thesauri consiliorum et decisionum appendix nova ...*, ed. Georg Dedekenn (Jena, 1671), 228f.

²⁷ BSELK, 882/883, BC, 359.

to God's will towards men and awaken and strengthen the faith.²⁸ The latter are called "sacramental signs" in *Loci Communes* (1521).²⁹ They not only point to the gift that is located elsewhere, but they actually convey and deliver the gift. This is what happens in baptism through the power of God's Word.

In *The Small Catechism* Luther stresses the union between the spiritual effects and the materiality of water. The material becomes, through the Word of God, a carrier of the spiritual gifts which God wishes to confer on man. The opponents asked: "How can a handful of water help the soul?" Against such a separation of the material from the spiritual Luther polemicizes in *The Large Catechism*.³⁰

Considering baptism in the light of *simul*, it can be said that according to the Lutheran understanding, baptism in water is simultaneously a baptism in the Holy Spirit. To be more precise about how this happens, one needs to use other linguistic tools than *simul*. An example of the importance to define more precisely what happens in baptism is found in the Colloquy of Montbéliard of 1586 between Jacob Andreae and Theodor Beza. One of the questions debated was whether baptism with water really is a spiritual baptism in the Holy Spirit.³¹ Andreae argued this position, and he expressly drew the parallel to the Lord's Supper. The idea that water is just a "representation" is as false as the idea that the bread is just a representation of the body of Christ.³² The union between water and Spirit can be compared to the union between the bread and the body of Christ. Water, united with the Word of God, is the very instrument for spiritual regeneration.³³ One of the reasons to stress this *unio* is that it means that all baptisms in water effect a spiritual rebirth. According to Beza, this was not the case since only the elect are born again in baptism.³⁴

As mentioned above, the concept of the *simul* perspective is not as precise as that of the *unio*. When it comes to the means of grace, it can be seen as secondary, describing a consequence of the *unio*. Or if one so wishes, *unio* can be seen as a more elaborated form of *simul* since the very presupposition of both is the ability to hold things together.³⁵

28 BSELK, 108/109, BC, 46/47.

29 Philipp Melanchthon, *Loci Communes* 1521, 328 (chapter 8,19).

30 BSELK, 1118/1119, BC, 460.

31 *Acta Colloquij Montis Belligartensis: Quod habitum est, Anno Christi 1586* (Tübingen, 1587), 429.

32 *Acta Colloquij*, 445.

33 *Acta Colloquij*, 444.

34 *Acta Colloquij*, 478f.

35 Daniel Johansson suggests that the formula "simul iustus et peccator" originates from Luther's reflections on the two natures doctrine. See the introduction to his article in the present volume.

7. The Lord's Supper

The doctrine of the Lord's Supper contains a clear *simul* which is a special feature of Lutheran theology. The elements are bread *and* the body of Christ, wine *and* the blood of Christ. The Roman Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation means that the elements are transformed from one substance to another, from bread and wine to the body and blood of Christ. Even if the elements look like bread and wine, the substance is transformed and only the accidents of bread and wine remain. In Reformed theology, on the other hand, the elements remain only bread and wine. Calvin teaches that Christ is spiritually present in the Supper and that man, in faith, is united with Christ's body in heaven, but orally man only receives bread and wine.

In contrast to both these positions, Lutheran doctrine states that in the Lord's Supper, man receives both bread *and* the body of Christ, both wine *and* the blood of Christ. Support for this is found in the *verba institutionis* and in the words of the apostle Paul, who says that the bread is participation in the body of Christ (1 Cor 10:16ff.).³⁶ According to Luther's words in *The Small Catechism*, man receives the body and the blood of Christ "under" bread and wine.³⁷ In *On the Babylonian Captivity of the Church* (1520) he uses the word *simul* in his argument that the bread is the body of Christ: "In like manner, it is not necessary in the sacrament that the bread and wine be transubstantiated and that Christ be contained under their accidents in order that the real body and real blood may be present. But both remain there at the same time [*simul*], and it is truly said: 'This bread is my body; this wine is my blood,' and vice versa."³⁸ In doing this, Luther and the subsequent Lutheran tradition broke free from the presuppositions of Aristotelian philosophy. They did not remain within the traditional framework, but instead, using a *simul* structure, according to which both the bread and wine, body and blood of Christ are present in a mysterious way. With a wording as close as possible to various Bible texts, they confessed something that lies beyond human reason and our senses.

Early on, Luther was critical of the use of Aristotle in theology. In his "Disputation against scholastic theology" (1517), he writes: "It is an error to say that no man can become a theologian without Aristotle. [...] Indeed, no one can become a theologian unless he becomes one without Aristotle" (theses 43, 44).³⁹ Luther criticizes the condition in which the philosophy of Aristotle becomes a straitjacket for theology. The Holy Spirit is greater than Aristotle, and man is to keep his reason captive

36 BSELK, 1468/1469, BC, 599.

37 BSELK, 882/883, BC, 362. Luther argues in a similar way in *The Babylonian Captivity of the Church*: WA 6: 511, LW 36:34f.

38 WA 6: 511f, LW 36: 35. "[...] sed utroque simul manente vere dicitur 'hic panis est corpus meum, hoc vinum est sanguis meus', et contra" (WA 6: 511,41-512,2). Cf. 1 Cor 10:16f.; 11:27.

39 WA 1: 226,14–16, LW 31: 12.

under Christ and his Word.⁴⁰ Luther confesses what the Scriptures say, also when he cannot explain it with his reason. The “simul” in *On the Babylonian Captivity of the Church* reveals not only a certain position about the elements in the Lord’s Supper, but also about the relationship between the Word of God in Scripture, faith, and reason.

8. Predestination

The Lutheran understanding of election has a characteristic shape. The position presented in the *Book of Concord* has been described as “broken” or “asymmetrical.” It is presented as the opposite of a “rationally implemented” doctrine of predestination.⁴¹ It states that God alone is the source of man’s salvation; it is not God but man’s own evil which leads to rejection and condemnation. The asymmetrical doctrine of predestination is characterized by not trying to answer the question *cur alii et non alii* (why some and not others are saved).

This position can also be described by means of *simul*. The authors of the *Formula of Concord* put forward and gave assent to several statements from the Holy Scripture without trying to bring them into a logical system. They confessed (1) the total inability of man to contribute to his salvation, saying that there are only two causes to man’s conversion, the Holy Spirit who works through the Word of God (FC, article II). They further confessed (2) that God elected individuals to salvation and that (3) God wishes the salvation of all sinners and that Jesus Christ died for each and every human being. The call to come to Christ is universal and seriously meant.

At this stage the authors of the *Formula of Concord* halt and do not try to answer questions to which these statements may lead. We cannot answer such questions, and if we try to do so, it will lead to speculation or twisting obvious statements in Scripture. The simultaneity of different statements regarding the fate of sinners is embraced by an awareness that man can only know what God has revealed in his

40 WA 6; 511,18–26, LW 36: 34.

41 Bengt Hägglund, *History of Theology*, trans. Gene L. Lund (Saint Louis: Concordia, 1968), 317. Cf. Rune Söderlund, *Ex praevisa fide: Zum Verständnis der Prädestinationslehre in der lutherischen Orthodoxie* (Hannover: Lutherisches Verlagshaus, 1983), 13: “‘Gebrochen’ steht dann hier im Gegensatz zu ‘rational durchgeführt’. Bezeichnend für eine gebrochene Prädestinationslehre ist es, daß die Frage unbeantwortet bleibt, warum einige zum Glauben kommen und erlöst werden und andere nicht (*cur alii et non alii*).”

Word.⁴² Therefore, the authors of the *Formula of Concord* could leave questions which according to them went beyond revelation without an answer. They did not try to explain mysteries that are not yet revealed. The simultaneity is here a kind of tool to interpret Scripture without building a totally consistent system of doctrine. It deliberately leaves some questions and tensions open.

Robert Kolb has suggested that the tension in the *Formula of Concord*, Article XI, “God’s eternal foreknowledge and election,” is an expression of a great tension running through the Wittenberg tradition, namely the tension between God’s responsibility and the human responsibility: “The Formula of Concord demonstrates the same desire to confess both God’s total responsibility for all things and the human creature’s responsibility for trusting God and the obedience that flow from that trust, which guided Luther as he wrote against Erasmus’s conception of the freedom of the will.”⁴³ This tension is not a logical solution or a theodicy but expresses a pastoral concern, which rests on the proclamation of law and gospel. The asymmetrical predestination is an expression of a law/gospel distinction, and it allows the law to kill (man is totally responsible for the sin) and the gospel to make alive (God is totally responsible for the salvation).⁴⁴

The *simul* of these different biblical statements illustrates that the authors of the Formula aimed not at a consistent, logical system, but rather at a faithful biblical exposition, freed from such philosophical conditions that from their point of view are an expression of the submission of God’s Word to reason.

The *simul* of some of the doctrines discussed above means that reason cannot work according to its usual principles when it comes to sense experiences. Here too, it turns out that reason cannot work according to its usual use of logic. In the question of election, the functions of *simul* are to keep believers free from constraint by logical and rational solutions and to maintain the tension between different perspectives. It serves to preserve the tension and the paradox of the biblical message.

9. Heavenly and Earthly Citizenship

The Lutheran concept of God’s two realms or ways of ruling expresses the biblical fact that a Christian has two citizenships, one heavenly and one earthly. Paul, when writing to the congregation in Philippi, uses the word “citizenship in heaven” (3:20)

42 Cf. Robert Kolb, *Bound Choice, Election, and Wittenberg Theological Method: From Martin Luther to the Formula of Concord* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2005), 267: “The Formula’s presentation of God does not distinguish the hidden and revealed God explicitly, but it operates with the concept.”

43 Robert Kolb, *Bound Choice, Election, and Wittenberg Theological Method*, 270.

44 Robert Kolb, *Bound Choice, Election, and Wittenberg Theological Method*, 260, 270.

to describe their new reality in Christ. At the same time we can see, not least from Paul's own example, that those believers, who were fortunate enough to have a citizenship in the Roman empire and were not slaves, retained that citizenship and could make use of its legal rights (e.g., Acts 22:25). In the sixteenth century Anabaptists on the left wing of the Reformation argued that Christians are not permitted to "pass sentences and administer justice according to imperial and other existing laws; punish evildoers with the sword; wage just wars; serve as soldiers" and other civil responsibilities.⁴⁵ Since these questions were raised during the Reformation period, the Lutheran reformers wrote rather extensive treatments about the relationship between the two regiments. Melanchthon describes them as God's two greatest gifts on earth (CA XXVIII).⁴⁶

Luther discusses the question, for example, in a booklet from 1523, *Von weltlicher Obrigkeit, wie weit man ihr Gehorsam schuldig sei* (*Temporal authority: To what extent it should be obeyed*). He begins by quoting two passages in the Scripture, Romans 13:1ff and 1 Peter 2:13f, and argues that the church should not try to rule the secular world.⁴⁷ For this purpose God has ordained a temporal authority. The emperor, king, or ruler is appointed by God to carry the sword and in doing so is God's servant to keep order in an evil world. Also, the Christian is obliged to obey the authorities. There is a limit to this obedience. When it commands things against the Word of God, a Christian must refuse to obey according to Peter's axiom: "One must obey God rather than man" (Acts 5:29).⁴⁸

God has, according to Luther, two regiments, two ways of ruling this world: The temporal, which resists the evil by force and creates conditions for a peaceful life, and the temporal regiment, the church, which makes the people pious through the Holy Spirit.⁴⁹

Luther also discusses the question how his understanding of Romans 13 can be harmonized with the Sermon on the Mount and its commandment to turn the other cheek. Luther's answer is that Romans 13 and Matthew 5–7 speak in harmony with each other if one considers the distinction between "for me" and "for others."⁵⁰ The temporal authority is a servant, not only to God but also to the weak and poor, who otherwise can be abused by the powerful and evil people. The Christian, serving the temporal authority with "the sword," does not use force or violence on his own behalf, but for others. He is still not allowed to use it for himself. Where his own matters are concerned, he should follow the Sermon on the Mount. But when it

45 CA XVI, BSELK, 110/111, BC, 48/49.

46 BSELK, 188/189, BC, 92/93.

47 WA 11: 247, LW 45: 85f.

48 WA 11: 265f, LW 45: 111.

49 WA 11: 251, LW 45: 91.

50 WA 11: 260, LW 45: 103f.