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'The Speech of the Dead': Identifying the No Longer and Now Living 'I' of Galatians 2.20

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Paul's strange confession in Gal 2.19–20 poses a question: is the 'I' who was crucified with Christ and no longer lives the same self as the 'I' who now lives and in whom Christ lives? To ask this question is to be drawn into conversation with the reception history of Galatians and also to be invited to locate the Pauline 'I' in and across the movements from death to life. This article suggests, in dialogue especially with Martin Luther, that for Paul the movement from the state of creation to the state of sin is a movement from life to death; the movement from sin to salvation, conversely, is a movement from death to life. Within or across these ruptures, salvation is as radical as death and resurrection. In this sense, the no longer and now living selves are not identical: the 'I' *is* in another as a gift. And yet, the 'I' who lives by grace is also the 'I' who was, is and will be loved by the 'Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me.'

Keywords: Paul, Galatians, justification, union with Christ, Luther, death, life, I

> Methinks we have hugely mistaken this matter of Life and Death.
> Herman Melville, *Moby-Dick*

1. Introduction

'Where I am not I', writes St Augustine, 'I am more happily I.' This is, as Augustine admits, a strange way of speaking. In context, however, it is provoked by another surprising confession: 'I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me' (Χριστῷ συνεσταύρωμαι· ζῶ δὲ οὐκέτι ἐγώ, ζῇ δὲ ἐν ἐμοὶ Χριστός, Gal 2.19–20). For Augustine, this Pauline pattern of speech generates a genre: 'the speech of the dead'. It is, Augustine insists, 'they who are already dead' who are 'living'.[1]

The history of reading Gal 2.20 is characterised by similar shock: 'Strange and unheard of', says Luther; 'inconceivable' and an 'enigma', adds Albert

1 Augustine, *Cont.* 29.

Schweitzer.[2] For E. P. Sanders, 'the real bite of Paul's theology' is expressed in the 'participatory categories' of texts such as Gal 2.20.[3] And yet, when it comes to what John Riches calls 'the task for interpreters' to account for and understand 'the language of participation and mystical union which [Paul] uses', Sanders waves the white flag of hermeneutical surrender:

> We seem to lack a category of 'reality' – real participation in Christ – which lies between naïve cosmological speculation and belief in magical transference on the one hand, and a revised self-understanding on the other. I must confess that I do not have a new category of perception to propose here.[4]

Riches is content to respond to Sanders with pregnant understatement: 'This is a strange view to take of a text which has exercised such influence throughout 2000 years of human history.'[5] Kevin Vanhoozer, however, is more diagnostic: to say 'participation is central to Paul's theology but largely inaccessible today' is symptomatic of a fragmented theological context in which 'various ditches, some uglier than others, have created divides and led to misunderstandings between biblical studies' and 'historical … and systematic theology'.[6] Vanhoozer's interpretative prescription is to 'name and navigate' these ditches: 'we have a better chance of responding to [the] questions' raised by Paul's language of 'union with and participation in Christ' if we take 'into account exegetical, [reception] historical, and systematic theological perspectives'.[7] The act of exegesis, in others words, raises deep interpretative questions that invite and even require theological retrieval and *ressourcement* as integral aspects of 'exegetical reasoning'.[8]

2 *Luther's Works* (American edition, 82 vols.; Philadelphia: Fortress/St. Louis: Concordia, 1955–), 26.159 (hereafter, LW); A. Schweitzer, *The Mysticism of Paul the Apostle* (trans. W. Montgomery; New York: Seabury, 1931) 3. Cf. S. Eastman, *Paul and the Person: Reframing Paul's Anthropology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2017) 1, who refers to the 'puzzle of Pauline anthropology'.

3 E. P. Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism: A Comparison of Patterns of Religion* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 1977) 502, 549.

4 Sanders, *Paul and Palestinian Judaism*, 522–3. The quotation is from J. Riches, *Galatians through the Centuries* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2013) 137.

5 Riches, *Galatians,* 137.

6 K. J. Vanhoozer, 'From "Blessed in Christ" to "Being in Christ": The State of the Union and the Place of Participation in New Testament Exegesis and Systematic Theology Today', *In Christ in Paul: Explorations in Paul's Theology of Union and Participation* (ed. M. J. Thate, K. J. Vanhoozer and C. R. Campbell; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2018) 3–33, at 6–7.

7 Vanhoozer, 'From "Blessed in Christ" to "Being in Christ"', 11.

8 M. Allen, '"It Is No Longer I Who Live": Christ's Faith and Christian Faith', *JRT* (2013) 3–26, at 5. See also G. Macaskill, *Union with Christ in the New Testament* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013) 3–4.

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This invitation to engage in theological retrieval and attend to reception history has been accepted by some. Richard Hays answered Sanders' interpretative agnosticism with a set of possible concepts within which to understand Paul's language of participation. Some of Hays' suggestions are contextual or critical possibilities (e.g. familial and political solidarity or narrative participation). But one has a rich historical and theological pedigree: 'My own guess is that' a consideration of Paul's language 'would be … clarified by careful study of participation motifs in patristic theology, particularly the thought of the Eastern fathers.'[9] This guess has generated further research. Michael Gorman, for instance, makes regular recourse to the language of *theosis* to interpret Paul: 'To be in Christ is to be in God… this means that for Paul … conformity to the crucified Christ … is really theoformity, or theosis.'[10] For Grant Macaskill, 'Gorman's work represents a welcome attempt to offer a coherent account of Paul's theology … and to do so with a willingness to draw upon theological conceptualities'.[11] That said, Gorman's deployment of *theosis* in the service of Pauline exegesis exhibits, as Macaskill points out, 'some serious problems'. Despite Hays' call for a 'careful study' of the Eastern fathers, 'Gorman does not actually engage with the patristic writings, nor does he offer much by way of an actual definition of *theosis*'. This latter point is particularly problematic as the term is 'theologically plastic'. The language of *theosis* is used within and as part of a theological synthesis in which its potential to confuse or merge creator and creation is constrained by both incarnational and Trinitarian dogma – a constraint that appears absent in Gorman both as he claims too little (e.g. cruciformity as a moral trope indicating a manner of living patterned after the crucified and risen Christ) and as he claims too much (e.g. *theosis* suggests that 'obedience and faith' amounts to 'a participation in the being … of God').[12]

The point here is not to critique Gorman in particular. Rather, as I contend for theological retrieval for the sake of exegesis, this is a reminder of the demands and difficulty of this task: it requires patient attention to the sources, an awareness of the history and debates surrounding doctrines, an understanding of the ways

9 R. Hays, *The Faith of Jesus Christ: The Narrative Substructure of Galatians 3:1–4:11* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002²) xxxii; cf. R. Hays, 'What Is "Real Participation in Christ"? A Dialogue with E.P. Sanders on Pauline Soteriology', *Redefining First Century Jewish and Christian Identities: Essays in Honor of Ed Parish Sanders* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2008) 336–51.

10 M. Gorman, *Inhabiting the Cruciform God: Kenosis, Justification, and Theosis in Paul's Narrative Soteriology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2009) 4.

11 Macaskill, *Union with Christ in the New Testament*, 27.

12 Macaskill, *Union with Christ in the New Testament*, 27, 74–5. For an account of Pauline soteriology that engages with patristic theologies of *theosis* in both depth and detail, see B. C. Blackwell, *Christosis: Engaging Paul's Soteriology with his Patristic Interpreters* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2016).

terms and concepts are borrowed, baptised and embedded within larger frames by Christian theology, as well as an openness to tracing the relationship between texts and the theological resources that have been utilised in the service of reading them. In this sense, Macaskill's book *Union with Christ in the New Testament*, which suggests covenant and divine presence as ways to conceptualise union in terms of representation and interpersonal communication, is a model: it engages the scriptural and early Jewish backgrounds as well as the reception historical and theological foregrounds of union with Christ before exploring that theme across the New Testament. The cost of this breadth, of course, is depth. Macaskill calls Galatians 2.19–20 'the most obviously participatory language in Galatians', and yet he only devotes seven lines to its analysis.[13]

My aim in this paper is to join those who have accepted the invitation to read Paul with recourse to reception history and theological reflection, but to do so in a more focused manner. For this reason, I will limit myself to one principal dialogue partner, Martin Luther, and one primary text, Gal 2.20.

Which brings us back to 'the speech of the dead'. Paul's confession gestures towards a strange and surprising simultaneity: 'I no longer live', says Paul; 'the life I now live', he adds. Listening to Augustine while reading Galatians indicates that the bishop is endeavouring to speak according to Paul's *modus loquendi*: 'I am not I, I am', or again, 'they who are already dead [are] living'. To attend to – to be addressed by and to learn to speak according to – this Pauline pattern, however, is also to encounter a question: who – or even which I – am I? Expressed in terms of the text: is (or are) the I that no longer lives and the I that now lives the same I? Pursuing this question is the purpose of this paper, and I will do so with reference to Luther's reading of Galatians, which, in contrast to some other theologies stemming from Augustine, captures the Pauline pattern according to which the 'I' both is not, but also is, the same someone.

2. Identifying the No Longer Living 'I'

'One speaks theologically about the human being', Oswald Bayer comments on Luther's *Disputatio de homine*, 'from three vantage points': as creature,

13 Macaskill, *Union with Christ in the New Testament*, 220–1. For a dogmatic account that resonates with Macaskill's, see M. Allen, who refers to 'personal union' as 'the stuff of covenant and communion' (M. Allen, *Sanctification* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2017) 225). Another recent study that explores conceptual resources with which to understand and translate Paul's participatory account of human personhood is found in Eastman, *Paul and the Person*. Eastman, however, does not engage the theological tradition so much as bring Paul into conversation with contemporary research in developmental psychology and philosophy of mind. For interaction with Eastman, see J. A. Linebaugh, 'Participation and the Person in Pauline Theology', *JSNT* 40 (2018) 516–523.

as sinner and as redeemed.[14] The question, of course, concerns the relationship between these three designations. David Kelsey, for instance, insists that while the categories of creation, salvation from sin and eschatological completion share the same anthropological structure (i.e. each emphasises that human being is dependent being), they are not a single but three stories of the self. In his words, 'the canon is made whole by three kinds of inseparable narratives, each of which has a distinct plot or narrative logic that cannot be conflated with either of the other two'. Consequently, 'the array of claims made in theological anthropology' in 'Holy Scripture … cannot be ordered into a single systematic structure'.[15] For Luther, by contrast, while the ruptures between creation and sin and between sin and salvation are real and radical, the three aspects are more closely related: 'the human is God's creation'; this creature 'was subjected after Adam's fall to the power of the devil, which means, under sin and death'; 'only through the Son of God, Christ Jesus, can [the person] be freed and be given eternal life as a gift'.[16]

Gal 2.20 confesses an I that no longer lives and an I that now lives. The relationship between these two lives is described as death: 'I have been crucified with Christ.' The exegetical challenge is both to identify each I and also to ask if and in what sense each I can be identified with the other. In other words: who no longer lives, who now lives, and are the two related despite being divided by death?

Martinus de Boer stands out somewhat among commentators on Galatians in that he explicitly asks who or which I Paul describes as having died. Taking his cue from Gal 2.19a and its announcement of a death 'to the law', de Boer suggests that the expression 'to die to' is 'metaphorical and means to become separated from'. It is thus Paul's life with respect to the law that ends, his 'nomistic I', to use de Boer's phrase.[17] Beverly Gaventa protests at this point, insisting there is 'no sign that this death and life are the death and life of the nomistic self only'. On the contrary, for Gaventa, as Paul's more obviously comprehensive statements about dying with Christ in Romans 6 and 2 Corinthians 5 indicate, Gal 2.20 puts 'the whole of the *ego*' in the grave.[18] Part of what pressures de Boer in this direction, however, is, to quote Luther again, the 'strange and unheard-of' confession of Paul. It is, de Boer sees, in being 'crucified with Christ' that the

14 O. Bayer, *Martin Luther's Theology: A Contemporary Interpretation* (trans. T. H. Trapp; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2008) 154.

15 D. Kelsey, *Eccentric Existence: A Theological Anthropology* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2009) 10, 897.

16 LW 34.148; *D. Martin Luthers Werke: Kritische Gesamtausgabe* (ed. J. F. K. Knaake *et al.*, 57 vols.; Weimar: Böhlau, 1883–) 39I:176.7–13 (hereafter, WA).

17 M. de Boer, *Galatians* (Louisville, KY: WJK, 2011) 159–61 (quotations at 159).

18 B. Gaventa, 'The Singularity of the Gospel Revisited', *Galatians and Christian Theology: Justification, the Gospel, and Ethics in Paul's Letter* (ed. M. Elliott *et al.*; Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2014) 187–99, at 193.

'nomistically determined I died', but such language, while said to be 'realistic and serious', is finally labelled 'metaphorical and hyperbolic' and thus 'cannot be taken literally'.[19]

It is, however, just this assumption that Paul's confession resists. Gal 2.20 is not an analogy between Christ's death and a death-like experience of the I. Gal 2.20, rather, is an announcement that Christ's death is the death of the I. To retreat to the language of non-literal and hyperbolic is to miss the radical reframing required by Paul's language. In Gerhard Ebeling's words, 'it is not life and death as they are that set the terms within which' Gal. 2.20 'must be made to fit'. On the contrary, 'it is the all-inclusive relationship to Jesus Christ that sets the terms by which the decision is made as to the meaning of life and death. Christ is not given his place in the order of life and death'. Instead, 'life and death are given their decisive place in Christ'.[20] As Death says to the god Apollo after a resurrection-like rescue in Thornton Wilder's play *The Alcestiad*, 'You broke the ancient law and order of the world: that the living are the living and the dead are the dead.' Apollo's response: 'Death, the sun is risen. You are shaking … Start accustoming yourself to change.'[21]

Reoriented in this way, it is possible to avoid de Boer's conclusion that 'the extreme language of crucifixion with Christ gives expression to … the loss of a previous manner of life'.[22] According to Gal 2.20, it is not only a manner of life that is lost; it is life that is lost: 'I no longer live.' But this only sharpens the question: who no longer lives? What is this life that ends in death with Christ?

Luther both asked and answered this question: 'Who is this me? It is I, an accursed and damned sinner.'[23] For Luther, the human *qua peccator* is precisely the human not living according to his or her nature *qua creatura*: created to live outside the self through faith in God and love for others, the sinner is curved in on and in love with the self; created in and for freedom, the sinner is bound yet still answerable; created to worship and receive from God, the sinner idolises and attempts to save her or himself.

Paul, like Luther, knows of a creation in which sin is unnatural, into which 'sin came' (Rom 5.12). But he also knows that into this creation, sin did in fact come, and since then, 'from Adam', Paul says, 'death reigned' (Rom 5.14). The initial I of Gal 2.20, the I who no longer lives, is thus the I that exists east of Eden and in Adam. There are several Pauline phrases that describe this 'life' (e.g. 'under sin' and 'according to the flesh'), but they converge in a common diagnosis: this life

19 De Boer, *Galatians*, 159–61.

20 G. Ebeling, *The Truth of the Gospel: An Exposition of Galatians* (trans. D. Green; Minneapolis: Fortress, 1985) 143.

21 T. Wilder, *The Alcestiad* in *The Collected Short Plays of Thornton Wilder*, vol. II (ed. A.T. Wilder; New York: Theatre Communications Group, 1998) 224.

22 De Boer, *Galatians*, 161.

23 LW 26.177.

is death.[24] However much the Pauline authorship of Ephesians continues to be disputed, the opening lines of Ephesians 2 are indisputably Pauline: 'dead in your trespasses and sins'. As Luther argued within but also against his inherited Augustinian tradition (and to anticipate the argument to come), the person *qua peccator* is not merely incomplete and wounded (and thus only in need of a grace that perfects and heals); the sinner is captive, complicit and a corpse (and thus in need of a grace that delivers, forgives and resurrects). In Galatians, the linguistic web of curse, imprisonment, slavery, sin and death all gesture in the direction of this diagnosis. In our passage, however, it is expressed in the unexpected dative phrases about dying to the law in order to live to God: if death in one relationship is required for there to be life in the most fundamental relationship (i.e. life in relation to God), then the most basic thing to say about the present life is that it is not life. To borrow another provocative yet profoundly Pauline sentence from Augustine, 'In comparison with [life with God], what we have now should be called death.'[25]

Two theological consequences follow from the depth of Paul's diagnosis. First, the movement from creation to sin – or perhaps better, the rupture between creation and sin – is a movement from life to death. Sin came, says Paul, and death reigned. And that suggests, second, that Paul's diagnosis requires a redefinition of death. Death is not, at least according to Paul's deepest sense, what waits at the end of life in the flesh; death is life in and according to the flesh. In Dietrich Bonhoeffer's words, 'this life is dead', not because 'one no longer exists', but rather because the relation with God that defines and grounds the human creature is contradicted: instead of living with and from God, the sinner 'lives out of' the self and in relation to sin 'and thus is dead'.[26] To bring this definition of death closer to the Pauline pattern of Gal 2.20, to be dead is to live with death before rather than behind you: death is life before and apart from death with Christ.

So again: who is the I who no longer lives? One way to answer this question with Paul is to say: the I who dies is the one who is dead.

3. Death with and Life in Christ

If the proclamation of Christ crucified is foolishness to Greeks, the Pauline announcement of crucifixion with Christ has been a stumbling block to interpreters. The scholarly habit of classifying Paul's confession as 'non-literal', 'figurative' and 'hyperbolic' is, if unsatisfying, at least unsurprising: 'the speech of the

24 Cf. Ebeling, *The Truth of the Gospel*, 142: Paul 'describes Adamic life as death'.

25 Augustine on Psalm 119. Cf. Kelsey's designation of 'sin as living death', *Eccentric Existence*, 864.

26 D. Bonhoeffer, *Creation and Fall* (Minneapolis: Fortress, 2004 [1937]) 90–1.

dead' is a difficult language.[27] There is, however, another and older tradition that, as Luther concludes, also domesticates Paul's confession of death. Thomas Aquinas, for example, can capture the image of some of Paul's most startling claims: 'I have been crucified with Christ', reads Thomas, and then he writes, 'the love of Christ … on the cross for me brings it about that I am always nailed with him'.[28] The death that occurs in this case, however, is not that of a who but of a what: it is not the person that is crucified with Christ on Thomas' reading but rather, in his words, 'concupiscence or the inclination to sin, and all such have been put to death in me'.[29]

For Thomas, 'the justification of the unrighteous is a movement … from the state of sin to the state of justice', a movement that is non-temporal but nevertheless ordered: first, an infusion of grace; second, a movement of the will towards God in faith; third, a movement of the will away from sin; and fourth, the remission of guilt.[30] Within this movement, the person is radically altered. Human nature, both as created and fallen, is, by grace, perfected and healed. But the maxim holds: *gratia non tollit naturam sed perficit* ('grace does not destroy but perfects nature'). When reading Galatians, this means, for Thomas, that when Paul announces a 'new creation' (Gal 6.15), he is actually naming a new creature, a person who in turn is not so much new as renewed: this is not a new life but instead what Thomas calls a new 'manner of life', a habit of living characterised by 'faith formed by love'.[31] The I, in other words, survives their salvation. The movement is drastic – from the state of sin to the state of justice – but it does not include or go through death. As Heiko Oberman summarises what he calls the 'unanimous medieval tradition' – exhibited not just in Thomas but also in 'Duns Scotus, Gabriel Biel' and 'the Council of Trent' – 'the *iustitia Dei* remains the finis, the goal … of the *viator* who is propelled on his way … by the *iustitia Christi* (i.e., by the infusion of grace)'.[32] 'Life', in Daphne Hampson's words, 'is a *via* for our transformation', a road to righteousness along which one's new manner of life, caused by grace and characterised by faith working through love, is the form of righteousness.[33]

27 For representative uses of these terms to describe Gal 2.19–20, see J. L. Martyn, *Galatians: A New Translation with Introduction and Commentary* (New York: Doubleday, 1997) 278; de Boer, *Galatians*, 160; Ebeling, *The Truth of the Gospel*, 144 (though Ebeling is arguing against rather than for a 'figurative' interpretation).

28 Thomas Aquinas, *Commentary on Saint Paul's Epistle to the Galatians by St. Thomas Aquinas* (trans. F. R. Larcher; Albany: Magi, 1966) 63.

29 Thomas Aquinas, *Galatians*, 62.

30 *Summa Theologica* IAIIAE q. 113.

31 Thomas Aquinas, *Galatians*, 53–5, 205–6.

32 H. Oberman, '*Iustitia Christi* and *iustitia Dei*: Luther and Scholastic Doctrines of Justification', *The Dawn of the Reformation: Essays in Late Medieval and Early Reformation Thought* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1986) 104–25, at 120.

33 D. Hampson, *Christian Contradictions: The Structures of Lutheran and Catholic Thought* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001) 83; see also 2–3, 56–96.

But here is Luther's alternative: 'where they speak of love' as the form of righteousness, 'we speak of faith' which 'takes hold of Christ' because 'he is the form' – he is 'true Christian righteousness'.[34] As Luther reads Paul's negation of ἔργα νόμου and his announcement of righteousness διὰ πίστεως Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ, he hears the apostle locating justification outside of the person and, according to Gal 2.17, 'in Christ'. In his words, 'when it is necessary to discuss Christian righteousness, the person must be completely rejected' because, negatively, the 'I, as a person distinct from Christ, belongs to death and hell' and, positively, because Christ 'is our righteousness and life'.[35] Oberman captures the contrast: for the medieval tradition the '*iustitia Dei*' is 'the *Gegenüber*', the 'standard according to which' a human life 'will be measured in the Last judgment'; for Luther, 'the heart of the Gospel is that the *iustitia Christi* and the *iustitia Dei* coincided' so that 'the sinner is' – now and definitively – justified, a reality that 'forms the stable basis and not the uncertain goal of life'.[36] Interpreting Galatians this way, Luther not only can but also is compelled to embrace the language of death. Speaking *in persona Pauli*, Luther demonstrates his fluency in the speech of the dead: 'I am not living as Paul now, for Paul is dead … my own life I am not living.'[37]

Returning to Galatians from this history of reading it, Paul's confession of crucifixion with and new life in Christ sounds like a dramatic depiction of an I who suffers a rupture as deep as death and as radical as resurrection. If the Pauline diagnosis of the movement from created to 'under sin' is that it is a movement from life to death, the Pauline declaration of the movement from 'under sin' to 'in Christ' names a movement from (and through) death to life.

One way to get textual traction on this counter-intuitive claim is to attend to Paul's use of the dative case and prepositional phrases and prefixes in Gal 2.19–20. As Susan Eastman notes, 'Paul's astounding self-description is all about death and life'.[38] The order, however, is alarming: death dominates v. 19 whereas life follows in v. 20. The effect, as Ebeling points out, is that 'what is said about life begins and ends with references to death: the death of the self ("I no longer live") and the death of and with Christ ("the son of God gave himself for me" and "I have been crucified with Christ")'.[39] Life, for Paul, is not the existence of the I before death; life is what emerges out of and after death. This Pauline pattern – both the unexpected order and the implied redefinitions – unsettles the understandable assumption that life and death are only the material subsistence or cessation of a created substance. According to

34 LW 26.129–30, cf. 126–8.
35 LW 26.166–7.
36 Oberman, '*Iustitia Christi* and *Iustitia Dei*', 19, 20, 25.
37 LW 26.170.
38 Eastman, *Paul and the Person*, 153.
39 Ebeling, *The Truth of the Gospel*, 137.

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Paul's grammar, death and life are not absolute concepts, they are relative – or better: relational. In Gal 2.19, life and death are first defined with the dative: death is death to the law and life is life to God. As the confession continues, prepositions colour in these relations christologically: Christ died for me (ὑπὲρ ἐμοῦ), which is itself the concrete gift (Gal 2.21) that grounds and includes my having been crucified with (σύν) Christ and on the far side of which 'Christ lives in me' (ἐν ἐμοί).

Luther caught the implications: when defining death and life theologically (and, as we will see below, when identifying the I), 'we cannot think in terms of the category of substance, but only in the category of relation'.[40] Attempting to answer a perennial exegetical question – what is the nature of the believer's crucifixion with Christ and how does it occur? – Luther offers what he takes to be a Pauline and relational answer: 'I have been crucified and have died with Christ. How? Through grace and faith.' This reply is shaped by the terms given in Galatians: righteousness is through faith and the death of Christ is the 'grace of God' that gives righteousness (Gal 2.16, 21). For Luther, however, grace and faith also specify the fundamental form of the divine–human relationship: 'God', who as creator and redeemer is giver, 'does not deal with us … except through' grace – that is, 'through the word of promise. We, in turn, cannot deal with God except through faith.'[41] Named from the giving side, this relation is called grace; named from the being-given-to side, the relation is called faith. To say, then, that one is crucified with Christ 'through grace and faith' is to say, in Ebeling's words, that 'dying' is 'caught up in our relationship with' Christ just as Paul's dative and prepositional phrases – 'live to God' and 'Christ lives in me' – indicate that 'living' is 'defined with reference to' and in relationship with God and Christ.[42]

This connection between a relational understanding of the self and a realistic reading of Paul's language of death and life is evident in Eastman's recent study *Paul and the Person*. 'Insofar as the self is always a self-in-relationship', she writes, the relational rupture occasioned by crucifixion with and life in Christ – that is, the rupture between being a self-in-relation to sin and being a self-in-relation to

40 WA 40/II.354 3. For 'relational ontology' in Luther, see W. Joest, *Ontologie der Person bei Luther* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1967) and G. Ebeling, *Dogmatik des christlichen Glaubens* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1979). For the application of this category to Paul, see E. Rehfeld, *Relationale Ontologie bei Paulus: Die ontische Wirksamkeit der Christusbezogenheit im Denken des Heidenapostels* (WUNT II/326; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck). Though in dialogue with different fields and voices, Eastman's *Paul and the Person* also argues for a thoroughly relational account of Pauline anthropology.

41 LW 36.42. For God as giver in both creation and redemption, see Luther's exposition of the three articles of the creed in his *Confession concerning Christ's Supper* (LW 37.66; WA 26, 505, 38–506, 7).

42 Ebeling, *The Truth of the Gospel*, 138–40.

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Christ – is the death of the old I even as it is the birth of the new.[43] There is, in Ian McFarland's words, a 'shift in relation' that 'comes entirely from God's side' and, as 'grace', 'has no ground in human being' even as it grounds human being: 'our lives are ... defined and sustained not by our natural capacities or incapacities but solely by God's word'.[44] The Pauline pattern of defining death and life in relation to Christ is thus a form of preaching the Pauline gospel: a person is not determined by what they have inherited or achieved – not by biology or biography, by pedigree or performance – but by God's gift of Jesus Christ.

What this requires, however, is attending to the soteriological register of death and resurrection in which Paul writes. Learning this language with and from Paul entails following a pattern of speech in which the divine acts of creation and salvation are spoken together. In Rom 4.5 and 4.17, for instance, God's unconditioned grace rhymes in three radical forms: *creatio ex nihilo*, *resurrectio mortuorum* and *iustificatio impii*.[45] Picking up this pattern, Luther offers mutually interpreting accounts of creation and justification. In his explanation of the first article in the *Small Catechism*, creation is confessed with recourse to soteriological categories: 'God has created me together with all creatures ... purely because of his fatherly and divine goodness and mercy, without any merit or worthiness on my part.'[46] The antithetical grammar and technical vocabulary of justification are used here in relationship to creation: not by or in consequence of human merit or worth, but purely – that is, solely – through divine mercy and goodness – that is, through grace. The effect is a confession of *creatio ex nihilo* in the language of salvation *sola gratia*: 'out of nothing' means 'by grace alone' – it means, in Bayer's words, creation 'as an absolute, categorical giving', a gift 'that finds nothing in its recipient' but contradicts that nothingness by calling them into being.[47] If Paul describes a divine *modus operandi* in Romans 4 by linking the predications of the God who justifies, creates and resurrects, Luther channels Paul as he characterises God as the one whose way is to 'make something out of nothing', who, as creator, always operates with incongruous grace: God 'accepts no one except the abandoned, makes no one healthy except the

43 Eastman, *Paul and the Person*, 160.

44 I. A. McFarland, 'The Upward Call: The Category of Vocation and the Oddness of Human Nature', *The Christian Doctrine of Humanity: Explorations in Constructive Dogmatics* (ed. O. D. Crisp and F. Sanders; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2018) 217–36, at 231, 235.

45 See O. Bayer, 'The Ethics of Gift', *LQ* 24 (2010) 447–68, at 452; cf. Linebaugh, *God, Grace, and Righteousness in Wisdom of Solomon and Paul's Letter to the Romans: Texts in Conversation* (NovTSup 152; Leiden: Brill, 2013) 152–4 and E. Käsemann, *An die Römer* (HNT 8a; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1973) 116–17.

46 BSLK 510.33–511.8.

47 Bayer, 'The Ethics of Gift', 452.

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sick, brings no one to life except the dead, [and] makes no one holy except sinners'.[48]

As this begins to indicate, the interpretative traffic runs both ways for Luther. In the *Heidelberg Disputation*, for example, he brings language from the doctrine of creation to a soteriological thesis: 'the love of God does not find but creates that which is pleasing to it'.[49] A similar move is evident in a series of later disputations prompted by Rom 3.28: 'in the divine work of justification', argues Luther, the negation of works and the incongruity between human unrighteousness and God's pronouncement of righteousness forces us to 'say with Paul that we are nothing at all, just as we have been created out of nothing'. Thus, in being justified, the *homo peccator* is, from this 'nothing', 'called righteous' and so, *ex nihilo*, constituted as 'a new creature'.[50] What Luther is tuned into is the way the disjunction in Paul between what God says and those to whom he speaks suggests that words like καλέω and δικαιόω function as verbal verbs – works of God enacted as words of God.[51] God's calling, for instance, calls into being: where there was a 'not my people', God calls and thereby creates 'my people'; to those who were 'not loved' God calls and so creates the 'loved' (Rom 9.24). Or again, to those who are sinners and unrighteous, God does the verbal verb δικαιόω and thereby creates the opposite: 'all sinned ... and are justified' (Rom 3.23–4; cf. 4.5; 5.6–10; Gal 2.15–21).[52]

Luther is thus reading with the grain of Paul's theology. In Galatians, the grammar of the gospel is christological and just so incongruous, creative and charismatic: it is Christ, the χάρις or gift of God, given at the site of sin and death, that creates righteousness and life.[53] As 2 Cor 4.6 has it, it is the creator who said 'Let light shine out of darkness' who shines into us by speaking the recreative and redemptive word of 'Jesus Christ'. Citing both this verse and Romans 4, Luther

48 WA 1 183.39–184.7; cf. Käsemann, *Römer*, 117: 'daß Gott immer nur dort schafft, wo irdisch nichts vorhanden ist'.

49 LW 31.41; WA 1.354–35: *Amor dei non invenit, sed creat suum diligibile.*

50 LW 34.113, 156.

51 According to Bayer's reconstruction, Luther's reformation breakthrough is tied up with a development in his understanding of language: rather than a word functioning only as a sign (*signum*) that refers to a reality (*res*) Luther came to see that God's words (*verba Dei*) are God's work (*opera Dei*), that divine speech establishes rather than merely refers to reality. The *signum* thus is the doing of the *res* and therefore, in the tradition of Ps 33.9 – 'God spoke and it was done' – Luther describes the divine address as a *verbum efficax* (LW 5.140; cf. O. Bayer, *Promissio: Geschichte der reformatischen Wende in Luthers Theologie* (Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1989²)).

52 Consider this line from a Lutheran hymn: 'Thy strong word bespeaks us righteous.' Cf. U. Wilckens, *Der Brief an die Römer* (3 vols.; EKKNT; Neukirchen: Benziger, 1978–82) I.188 n. 39: 'die Sünde aller [ist] also der Ort, an dem die Gottesgerechtigkeit wirksam wird'.

53 J. A. Linebaugh, 'The Grammar of the Gospel: Justification as a Theological Criterion in the Reformation and Galatians', *SJT* 71 (2018) 287–307.

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insists that neither creation nor new creation are the kindling of a 'spark' 'out of a gleaming coal'; but rather 'out of darkness light; out of death life, out of sin righteousness'.[54] To bring Paul and Luther together by borrowing from Kathyrn Tanner, for both the apostle and his Reformation reader, 'the grace' that saves 'us has its analogue in the divine act that created us – from nothing'.[55]

Paul's good news is thus as deep as his diagnosis. 'Sin came', 'death reigned', and life in Adam and 'under sin' is death. Correspondingly, redemption takes the form of resurrection as the I who is dead dies with Christ and new life is created as grace opens the grave. In Luther's most succinct formulation: 'death and resurrection … is full and complete justification'.[56]

What this reading requires is a christological and relational definition of life to pair with the previous definition of death: if being dead is living with death before you, being alive is living with death behind you. Or again, to make the christological relation more explicit: death is life before and apart from death with Christ; life is life after and out of death with Christ.

4. Identifying the Now Living 'I'

The opening question still stands: is (or are) the I that no longer lives and the I that now lives the same I?

4.1 *No: I Am Not Me*

The divide between the creature and the sinner is life and death; that between the sinner and the new creature is death and life. 'I died to the law', 'I have been crucified with Christ', 'I no longer live' – these moments of Paul's confession gesture towards a discontinuity as deep as death. 'Christ lives in me', 'the life I now live' – these indicate a rupture as fundamental as resurrection.[57] There are, to borrow an image from Lou Martyn, 'no through trains' from the old I to the new:[58] 'not development or maturation', comments Eastman on Gal 2.20, but 'death and resurrection … are the watchwords of Christian existence'.[59] To hear Paul's confession is to encounter, as Tanner puts it, a 'discontinuous radical

54 LW 8.39.

55 K. Tanner, *Christ the Key* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010) 64–5.

56 LW 36.67.

57 Cf. J. M. G. Barclay, *Paul and the Gift* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2015) 386: Paul's 'language of "death" and "life" … marks a radical disjunction'.

58 J. L. Martyn, *Theological Issues in the Letters of Paul* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon, 1997) 221.

59 Eastman, *Paul and the Person*, 174; cf. S. Chester, 'Apocalyptic Union: Martin Luther's Account of Faith in Christ', *In Christ in Paul: Explorations in Paul's Theology of Union and Participation* (ed. M. J. Thate, K. J. Vanhoozer and C. R. Campbell; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2018) 375–98, at 378: for 'Luther', Gal 2.19–20 describes 'not … the gradual healing of the self but … its death'. See also Hampson, *Christian Contradictions*, 101: 'there is no linear progress from being a sinner to being justified'.

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leap between qualitatively different conditions', a passage from 'next to nothing' to 'everything'.[60]

As Luther works to communicate the non-identity of the no longer and now living I, he starts, again, to speak 'the speech of the dead': 'I am dead; by my own life I am not living.'[61] For Luther, the Pauline insistence that 'I no longer live' generates a corresponding confession, captured succinctly and with full shock in the phrase, 'I'm not me' (Bob Dylan). With the words ζῶ οὐκέτι ἐγώ, Luther comments, 'Paul clearly shows how he is alive', locating life outside of rather than 'in my own person or substance'.[62] As *The Freedom of a Christian* concludes, 'a Christian lives not in him or herself', but rather, to return to Luther's Galatians commentary, the gospel 'snatches us away from ourselves and places us outside ourselves' (*nos extra nos*).[63] For Luther, as Wilfried Joest suggests, the essence (or *Wesen*) of a person lies not in but out – a person *is* not *in sich und für sich* but *extra se*.[64] Existence, to borrow Kelsey's title, is eccentric.

That the person lives outside the self, however, does not imply that he or she live nowhere. According to Gal 2.20, life is specifically located: 'Christ lives in me'; 'I live in faith'.[65] These dative phrases are debated. Christ living ἐν ἐμοί, as the majority of commentators argue, can be locative, but it is also possible, with Calvin, to read this as a dative of respect: Christ, who is not me, lives for me.[66] Similarly, life ἐν πίστει may, as most take it, be instrumental (i.e. 'by faith'), though as de Boer contends, it could be a dative of sphere, indicating the 'territory where Christ is Lord'.[67]

60 Tanner, *Christ the Key*, 65.

61 LW 26.170.

62 LW 26.166.

63 LW 26.387; WA 7.69, 12–13.

64 Joest, *Ontologie der Person bei Luther*, 234, 249. Cf. McFarland, 'The Upward Call', 224: 'the determining factor', when identifying who a person is, 'is not anything intrinsic to and thus located within the individual, but extrinsic: constituted entirely by God's address'.

65 Paul also locates life 'in the flesh', a phrase that Luther interprets as follows: 'I do live in the flesh, yet not on the basis of the flesh or according to the flesh' (LW 26.172). As Eastman argues, this localising of life 'in the flesh' also indicates that the person is always embodied and socially embedded (*Paul and the Person*, 156–60). The other crucial question raised here, but not considered in this article, is the relationship between the I in grace and the I in glory (i.e. between the person redeemed and in Christ and the person resurrected and with Christ). Both Romans 8 and 1 Corinthians 15 point to a material continuity, but the latter's language of 'spiritual body' catches something of the dialectic explored here: it is the body that is raised, but precisely that body is new. The Easter narratives capture this as well: the body of the risen Christ is different, but that it is the body of Jesus is evident as the tomb is empty and the wounds remains. Allen suggests that one way to express this double 'nature of the new' is to say that we are dealing not with 'transubstantiation' but with 'transfiguration' (*Sanctification*, 225).

66 See M. Allen, *Justification and the Gospel: Understanding the Contexts and Controversies* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2013) 104.

67 De Boer, *Galatians*, 157.

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Whatever one decides, for Luther, the datives define life in relationship – specifically in relationship to Christ in whom I trust and who lives in and for me. The corollary to living *extra se*, according to Joest, is that one is 'carried' by another.[68] Luther's way of emphasising this in the Galatians commentary is to say that the life of the I that is ex-centric is also alien. There is, he writes, 'an alien life, that of Christ in me'.[69] As Luther's early lectures on Romans have it, we live both outside ourselves and in another: *extra nos et in Christo*.[70] The life that is confessed as 'not I, but Christ in me' is grounded outside of the self and in relationship to Christ. John Barclay is thus reading Paul with Luther when he describes this 'wholly reconstituted existence' as 'suspended by' and 'founded on … the life of another, the life of "Christ in me"'.[71]

Gal 2.19–20 can therefore be said to 'disclose and require', as Eastman argues, 'an intersubjective account of the person', an account in which to be is, in Ebeling's phrase, to be 'in relationship' (*in relatione*).[72] This is, according to Luther, precisely the sort of definition Paul provides in Rom 3.28. As thesis 32 of the *Disputatio de homine* asserts: 'the human being *is* justified by faith'.[73] On Luther's reading, to 'live by faith in the Son of God' defines human being because it locates life in relationship to the one who 'loves me and gave himself for me'. Faith, in other words, is not a predicate of a self-defined person; it is, rather, a name for the relation with Christ that creates and carries the person – it is *being* grounded in gift. This definition encompasses both creation and new creation: out of nothing, by grace, God creates; out of sin and death, by grace, God redeems and resurrects.[74]

On Luther's reading of Paul, faith is righteousness because of the one to whom it relates: 'faith … takes hold of Christ … the One who is present in faith'.[75] In Gal 2.19–20, Paul's language and grammar gesture in this direction. Death and life are situated to and with and in – that is, with and in relationship to – God and Christ:

68 Joest, *Ontologie*, 261–2.

69 LW 26.170. Joest introduces the term 'exzentrisch' (*Ontologie*, 233–353). For variations, see e.g. ecstatic (Oberman), a-centric (Allen) and eccentric (Kelsey).

70 WA 56.159; LW 25.136.

71 Barclay, *Paul and the Gift*, 379, 386.

72 Eastman, *Paul and the Person*, 152; Ebeling, *Lutherstudien*, 156–7. Cf. N. Slenckza, 'Luther's Anthropology', *Oxford Handbook of Martin Luther's Theology* (ed. R. Kolb, I. Dingel and L. Batka; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015) 212–31 and R. Saarinen, 'Martin Luther and Relational Thinking', *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017) 1–19.

73 LW 34.139. As Bayer points out, because this is a definition, Luther's Latin – *Hominem iustificari fide* – is better rendered, 'the human being is human in being justified by faith' (*Martin Luther's Theology*, 155 n. 3); cf. Slenckza, 'Luther's Anthropology'.

74 Cf. Bayer, *Martin Luther's Theology*, 156: 'As created being, human existence is justified-through-faith existence. As justified-through-faith existence, it is created existence.'

75 LW 26.129–30.

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'live to God'; 'crucified with Christ'; 'Christ lives in me'; 'I live by faith in the Son of God.'[76] Luther's image of the 'happy exchange' is a way of depicting these dynamic relationships: it is not just an exchange of properties (i.e. our sin for Christ's righteousness); it is a communion of persons. Because Christ 'took upon himself our sinful person and granted us his innocent and victorious person', because he became 'Peter the denier, Paul the persecutor … David the adulterer' and 'the person of all people', Luther invites us to sing, 'mine are Christ's living and dying' and, joining with the Song of Songs, 'my beloved is mine and I am his'.[77]

Such a song, of course, is only sung east of Easter and thus on the far side of the divide Paul calls death. This life, in other words, is not a given; it is given – it is a gift. According to Gal 2.20–1, 'the grace of God' with which I die and in which I live is the self-giving of the 'Son of God who loved me and gave himself for me'.[78] The content of grace, as Barclay suggests, is Christ crucified and risen; correspondingly, the character of grace is incongruity – a gift that comes as God's 'counter statement to the possible', giving righteousness at the site of sin and creating life out of death. As another Pauline confession puts it, 'by grace, I am' (1 Cor 15.10).

The life of the now living I can thus be called christological – I am in Christ – but also ex-centric, alien and charismatic – I am: outside myself, in another, as gift. Or again, to combine Dylan and Luther, I am both 'not me' and, by grace, 'as Christ'.[79]

4.2 *Yes: I Am Loved*

Hampson asks a question at this point that forces us to ask our opening question one more time.[80] Recognising that Luther's reading of Paul is in the

76 For Luther, the phrases *extra se*, *coram deo* and *in Christo* are ways of referring to these relationships.

77 LW 26.280–4; *Freedom of the Christian*, 287. Cf. Eastman, who argues that Paul's language of 'union discloses a relational notion of the person' (*Paul and the Person*, 153), and Vanhoozer, who plays with the resonance between union, communion and communication ('From "Blessed in Christ" to "Being in Christ"', 27–8).

78 See Bayer who, with reference to Galatians 2.19–20, speaks of 'a gift from someone else, by whose life I live' (*Martin Luther's Theology*, 235). Bonhoeffer offers another definition of death in these terms: being dead is 'having to live'. Being alive, then, is having life – death is life as demand; life is life as gift (*Creation and Fall*).

79 LW 26.168: 'by [faith] you are so cemented to Christ that he and you are one person, which … declares: "I am as Christ", and Christ, in turn, says, "I am as that sinner"'.

80 Hampson also asks about the place of love in Luther's theology. If Christ and the Christian are, in Luther's words, 'so cemented' that he and they 'are as one person', does not the otherness of the I and Christ collapse? But love, Hampson contends, is 'bi-polar'; it demands two rather than one and so, by definition, disappears if the 'distance' and distinction between persons is lost (*Christian Contradictions*, 29–39, 246). For Luther, however, oneness with Christ does not, as Bayer puts it, 'denote an identity without distinction' (*Martin Luther's Theology*, 229 n. 31). To be 'as one person' with Christ, Luther writes, is to be in a relation 'more intimate than a

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tradition of what William James calls 'twice born' religion, Hampson provides an apology for the 'once born' variety. 'I should not', she says, 'wish to base myself on that which lies outside myself … I am interested in what I should call being "centered" in oneself (as opposed …to living *extra se*) … I am concerned for the transformation of the self, rather than the breaking of self.' Her rationale here is deep: marginalised and oppressed persons are not helped but harmed by being 'told that [the] self needs to be' shattered.[81] This protest contains a crucial question: are soteriologies of death and resurrection – that is, accounts of salvation such as we encounter in Galatians and Luther's reading of it – finally opposed to the human person? Does the announcement of the death of the I eliminate the possibility of God's love for the I? If I only am outside myself and in Christ, does God ever look at and love me?

These questions are an acute way of asking whether and in what sense there is continuity between the no longer living and the now living I. One possible answer is to ground personal continuity in creation. For Thomas Aquinas, as we have seen, created life is not lost – sin is not defined as death – and therefore God always and ever loves God's creatures and, in grace, it is precisely their natures as created and fallen that are perfected and healed so that it is finally they who are beheld and beloved.[82] In Gal 2.20, however, the drama and 'disjunction between old and new … entails', as John Webster notes, 'the exclusion of certain ways of understanding the continuity of the self'. It is not, for instance, that 'the old and new are points on a continuum' that only indicate 'different dispositions of a subject that is [finally] self-identical'.[83] The discontinuity is more fundamental – it is death. To capture this, readers of Paul refer to 'a radical break' and a 'reversal'[84] or 'a counter-movement … that is wholly incongruous with the prior conditions' and possibilities of 'human history'.[85]

husband and wife' (LW 26.168). Personal union, in other words, is a relational notion; it names a communion of persons even as it anchors one (the creature) in the other (Christ). Cf. W. Elert, *The Structure of Lutheranism* (trans. W. A. Hansen; St. Louis: Concordia, 1962) 176 and Ebeling, *The Truth of the Gospel*, 149.

81 Hampson, *Christian Contradictions*, 237–41; see also D. Hampson, 'Luther on the Self: A Feminist Critique', *Word and World* 8 (1988) 334–42.

82 For two recent engagements with Catholic reflection on nature and grace and what Protestant theology might learn from and contribute to that conversation, see Allen, *Sanctification*, 212–25 and McFarland, 'The Upward Call'.

83 J. Webster, 'Eschatology, Ontology, and Human Action', *TJT* 7 (1991) 4–18, at 5. In one sense, this article is an attempt to engage Webster's question about the anthropological and ontological entailments of Paul's language in places such as Gal 2.20 and 2 Cor 5.17 (4–5). What Webster calls for is a 'metaphysics of the *solus Christus*' (10).

84 Eastman, *Paul and the Person*, 174.

85 Barclay, *Paul and the Gift*, 412–14. McFarland also asks about the 'discontinuity between human existence as created and redeemed' and argues that while 'there is nothing in our

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That, however, is not the whole story. Both Barclay and Eastman, whom I just quoted, also point to a paradoxical congruity and continuity. For Barclay, God's incongruous gifts are 'entirely congruous' with God's promises and, as Eastman adds, the 'continuity of the person' is anchored in being addressed by God's promise and call. In Luther's phrase, as both creature and new creature, the person is *creatura verbi* – a creature of the word: called, by grace and from nothing, into being and called, by grace and out of sin and death, righteous and alive.[86]

But again: is (or are) the I as created and fallen and recreated the same? If the distance between the old and new is death – and if the 'life I now live' is *extra se*, *in Christo* and *sola gratia* – does the person persist? Gal 2.20 gestures towards an answer to this question in a way that responds directly to Hampson's concern about the elimination of love. According to Paul's confession, there is a 'me' that Christ loved and gave himself for. *Pro me* – for me: for Luther, 'this brief pronoun' – 'me' – is 'true power'. 'Anyone who can speak' and 'apply it to her or himself', he says, 'defines Christ properly' as 'grace' and 'saviour', as 'mercy' and as he who 'gives and is given'. The power of this pronoun, in other words, is that it gives peace to 'a trembling and troubled heart' and thus 'rest to your bones and mine'.[87] What this picks up on is the Pauline identification of those whom Christ loves and those to whom he gives himself: Christ gave himself to deliver 'us', says Gal 1.4; 'the son of God loved and gave himself for me', adds Gal 2.20. Luther wants to know, 'Who is this me?' His answer, 'It is I, an accursed and damned sinner', resonates especially with Rom 5.6–10. The me – the us – that Jesus loved and gave himself for is me as a sinner and an enemy, me when I was weak and ungodly. This I may no longer live, but this I was and is loved. According to Paul, the self does not survive salvation – the old ἄνθρωπος dies. But the gospel says, in the words of the novelist Walker Percy, 'I love you dead' (cf. Eph 2.1–4).[88] The persistence of the person, in other words, is not grounded in the person: I am not me but, by grace, in Christ. But it is exactly this grace and this Christ – the one who loved me and gave himself for me – that establish a kind of continuity, what might be called the passive persistence of the person. The cross is, at once, a death

natures … that serves as the pivot point … that guarantees that the beings we are now … subsist across that divide', we can nevertheless say that 'our natures are not destroyed or left behind' because it is 'we, body and soul, who live with God in glory' even though 'we do not do so because of the qualities of our souls or bodies' ('The Upward Call', 236).

86 That the person is anchor by a word of address entails that humans are, as McFarland points out, 'the sort of creatures that can respond when called' – that they are spoken to precisely as the kind of creatures who are both receptive and response-able ('The Upward Call', 224; cf. Bayer, *Freedom in Response*).

87 LW 26.177–8.

88 W. Percy, *Love in the Ruins* (New York: Picador, 1971) 68.

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that breaks the story of the self into two even as it is a gift and love that has a way of holding it together. I may no longer live, but, in the dative and accusative cases if you will – in the cases of the creature and receiver – there is and was and will be a me who is persistently loved and graced by God.[89]

So finally: is (or are) the no longer and now living I the same? Paul's 'strange and un-heard of' confession requires a dialectical conclusion, one that unburdens those carrying the weight of their own worth even as it sings 'I love you' to those who disbelieve they could ever hear such words. No: death and life divide the no longer and now living I, and the life of the latter is gifted, ex-centric and in Christ. But also yes: though I no longer live, there is a me that is ever and always loved. To speak 'the speech of the dead', it seems, is to talk twice: life and death and death and life separate the self. And yet, in and across the passages of creation, sin, grace and glory there is a me that is loved and loved and loved and loved. To combine the confession: I am – outside myself, by grace, and in Christ a me whom God did, does and will ever love.

89 See Bayer, who refers to the 'dative of gifted-existence' (O. Bayer, 'The Being of Christ in Faith', *Lutheran Quarterly* 10 (1996) 135–50, at 142).