



University
of Glasgow

<https://theses.gla.ac.uk/>

Theses Digitisation:

<https://www.gla.ac.uk/myglasgow/research/enlighten/theses/digitisation/>

This is a digitised version of the original print thesis.

Copyright and moral rights for this work are retained by the author

A copy can be downloaded for personal non-commercial research or study,
without prior permission or charge

This work cannot be reproduced or quoted extensively from without first
obtaining permission in writing from the author

The content must not be changed in any way or sold commercially in any
format or medium without the formal permission of the author

When referring to this work, full bibliographic details including the author,
title, awarding institution and date of the thesis must be given

Enlighten: Theses

<https://theses.gla.ac.uk/>
research-enlighten@glasgow.ac.uk

ENCOUNTER AND THE CHRIST EVENT IN THE THEOLOGY OF
RONALD GREGOR SMITH

Submitted for the Degree of Master of Theology of the
University of Glasgow.

Research conducted in the Divinity Faculty,
University of Glasgow, 1987-1988



Michael Bonser

July, 1988

ProQuest Number: 10970820

All rights reserved

INFORMATION TO ALL USERS

The quality of this reproduction is dependent upon the quality of the copy submitted.

In the unlikely event that the author did not send a complete manuscript and there are missing pages, these will be noted. Also, if material had to be removed, a note will indicate the deletion.



ProQuest 10970820

Published by ProQuest LLC (2018). Copyright of the Dissertation is held by the Author.

All rights reserved.

This work is protected against unauthorized copying under Title 17, United States Code
Microform Edition © ProQuest LLC.

ProQuest LLC.
789 East Eisenhower Parkway
P.O. Box 1346
Ann Arbor, MI 48106 – 1346

"In the world, in the other person
whom you truly encounter in love,
God is present."

Ronald Gregor Smith.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The writing of this thesis would not have been possible without the generosity of the Dr. Williams's Trust, 14, Gordon Square, London. My grateful thanks are offered to the Trustees for the awarding of a Dr. William's bursary which paid for this study.

My special gratitude goes to Professor George M. Newlands for his encouraging and persistent supervision. A considerable period was spent reading through all the available unpublished material of Professor Gregor Smith, and my thanks are due to Mr. David Weston and his staff for the courtesy and co-operation of the Special Collections Department of the University of Glasgow.

I would be remiss if I did not note the kindness of Professor A.D. Galloway for reminiscences of his friend and colleague.

I do thank my wife and children for their understanding and patience during a time when this study meant a curtailing of family activities.

CONTENTS

Summary i - ii

Introduction 1 - 21

SECTION ONE

1) Theological Approach 23 - 44

2) Personhood 45 - 67

SECTION TWO

3) Encounter 69 - 91

4) THE CHRIST-EVENT

A) Christology 92 - 130

B) Eschatology 131 - 149

SECTION THREE

5) Salvation 151 - 168

6) Prayer 169 - 184

Conclusion. 186 - 188

Bibliography 190 - 206

SUMMARY

The introduction highlights the existential loneliness out of which Gregor Smith writes. It points to his discovery and development of transcendence within the world. It notes the influence of Eliot's image of waiting and Jasper's concept of European man.

Section One deals firstly with a broad survey of Gregor Smith's theological concerns (Chapter One) giving attention to theology as sui generis and to language, style, the place of scripture and the use of paradox. The primary theological concern is with man. The important distinction between life and real life is introduced. Secondly (Chapter Two) it seeks to set the immediate context for the aspect of Gregor Smith's theology explored in this thesis. It takes note of the contribution of John Baillie and H.H. Farmer. Freedom is seen to be of the essence of personhood. God and man participate in the thoroughly personal nature of encounter.

The central section is an exposition of Gregor Smith's thought concerning the encounter between man and God through the Christ-event. Chapter Three advocates the unity of purpose in his theology. It shows that encounter is an integral part of history. Conversion is discussed as a characteristic expression of encounter. Chapter Four is a consideration of the Christ-event. It is in two sections (A. Christology and B. Eschatology)

to indicate that these themes must be held together for an adequate understanding. The major part is given over to the lectures on Atonement in which Gregor Smith pursues a locus for theology. Understanding of the Atonement comes through the traditional concepts of the sin of man and the faithfulness of God. The heart of the Atonement is vicarious suffering. The Atonement is known by faith as an eschatological reality.

The third section seeks to draw out the implications for Christian thought and practice of encounter and the Christ-event. Chapter Five looks at how it is possible to speak of salvation in Gregor Smith's terms. Salvation is to receive the gift of being fully personal. Chapter Six discusses the importance of prayer. Salvation is expressed in the community of faith founded on true prayer, in which the community of faith shares God's being for the world.

INTRODUCTION

Introduction.

"So in Christ we who are many form one body, and each member belongs to all the others." Rom.12:5

In the development of my theological concern, first through a pastorate and then missionary service involved with the preparation of church leaders, this text of Paul has become increasingly central to my thought about the nature and task of the church. So this thesis began in an exploration of the thought of Martin Buber regarding the personal, with a desire to deepen my understanding of the pastoral task. Professor Ronald Gregor Smith described Martin Buber as "the man of our time concerned with the personal."¹ Circumstance and opportunity brought me face to face with the theology of Ronald Gregor Smith. Associated with Buber throughout his theological activity, Gregor Smith was recognised as his leading interpreter. He was responsible for mediating not only Buber but a number of leading theological figures to the English speaking world. This thesis explores the theology of Ronald Gregor Smith through the concept of Encounter. The body of the text works successively through his approach to Theology, and in particular theological language; Personhood; Encounter; Christology, which is primarily focused in

1. Martin Buber. R.Gregor Smith, 1966. Preface, p.vii

his treatment of the Atonement; Eschatology, which necessitates the consideration of Faith and History; and Salvation, which is the climactic description of encounter. The "Christ-Event", particularly as worked out in relation to the Atonement, is central to the development of Ronald Gregor Smith's thought. Subsequently his unpublished lectures on the Atonement have been made central to the structure of this thesis.

The thesis concludes with a consideration of Prayer. This is, I believe, fully in keeping with the direction of Gregor Smith's thought, but should not be assumed to indicate a pietistic capitulation. True prayer arises from christian community, an objective which Gregor Smith never abandoned. It turns one to the world, in service of the world's freedom. Where I diverge most clearly from the thought of Gregor Smith is in the identity of the redeemed community. It is not necessary to anticipate the conclusion here, but the thesis is that true encounter creates community. The identity of this community is, I believe, a major question that remains to be put to the theology of Professor Gregor Smith.

This thesis does not attempt a comparison of the work of Gregor Smith with either that of his contemporaries or with current theological debate to any great extent. It is rather a study of a particular theme and its development and coherence within the thought of Gregor Smith as it stands in its own right.

There is at present considerable writing from an evangelical perspective concerned with the development of Christian community. Often this is accompanied by a radical concern for involvement in issues of social justice. Gregor Smith held a life long concern for the realisation of "true community". Although he has little specific comment to make on social issues, there are, as we shall see, hints, especially in the lectures on Christian Action. He calls for responsible discipleship but gives no clear shape or form to this. For himself he continued to practice the churchmanship of the Church of Scotland, recognising that in the church's forms and traditions, the Word of God is embedded. ² Gregor Smith's theology offers a theological basis for the development of Christian community and for relevant social action. In the form of work and worship these are the elements that constitute true prayer.

2. Apologetics Lectures in Systematic Theology III, Glasgow. p.20a.

Important Note: Throughout the footnotes, references to Glasgow. are to the unpublished material held in the Special Collections Department and listed in the Bibliography.

There is a brief biographic introduction to Eugene Long's commemorative collection of essays, highlighting in particular Gregor Smith's academic landmarks.³ There is a much fuller and more analytical biography in the first part of Keith Clements' recent study of Gregor Smith. "Ronald Gregor Smith, the second son of George Henry and Helen (Wilson Dea) Smith, was born in Edinburgh on April 17, 1913." ⁴ At George Heriot's School, Edinburgh, his abilities, particularly as a linguist, were recognised and encouraged. He entered Edinburgh University in 1930 and studied in the English department under Professor Herbert Grierson. Graduating M.A., with first-class honours, he gained a scholarship and spent ten months in Munich from September 1934 to July 1935. On his return to Edinburgh he entered New College, where Professor John Baillie had just returned from the States to teach. He graduated, gaining his B.D. with distinction. He then spent a year in Copenhagen studying Kierkegaard and outlining a possible D.Litt. subject. Following his ordination he served as the minister of Lawson Memorial Church, Selkirk, from 1939-44. His decision to enter the chaplaincy service was a

3. Eugene T. Long, God, Secularisation and History. Essays in Memory of Ronald Gregor Smith. Columbia:1974.

4. Keith W. Clements, The Theology of Ronald Gregor Smith. Leiden:1986

very significant one and is detailed below. He spent two years with the Scots Guards at the Pirbright Camp in Surrey. During this time he was able to meet T.S. Eliot, in London, to develop what was to become an important friendship. In 1946 he became the Education Officer responsible for the re-establishment of the University of Bonn. In 1947 he was appointed associate editor of the Student Christian Movement Press, and in 1950 succeeded Hugh Martin as managing director and editor. Here, he was particularly influential in encouraging the translation and publication of several important continental thinkers. In 1956 he was appointed Primarius Professor of Divinity in the University of Glasgow, where he was to serve until his untimely death in 1968. In 1963 he was awarded the degree of Doctor of Divinity by the University of Edinburgh, and in the same year Marburg University awarded a degree of Doctor of Theology, honoris causa, for his promotion of the development of understanding in theological thought between Britain and the Continent.

As one attempts to build a picture of Ronald Gregor Smith as a person it becomes clear that, while his outward circumstances on the whole were conducive to a cultured and aesthetic life, he was a man assailed by internal pain and turmoil. In Still Point and the projected Turning Point⁵ there is conveyed a stark sense of desperate isolation and loneliness. The kind of separation that cannot be overcome by the mere presence of other people. So for instance;

"the way for myself still has to be traversed. It is a way that leads out of the present broken and drifting isolation into wholeness, accomplished single-heartedness, real community. For only out of the strength of real community is it possible to meet life, and to be aware of history and to live in the Presence."

This may be part of the attraction of the haunting echoes of loneliness in the poetry of T.S. Eliot. His own poetry of the thirties and forties reverberates with this note of isolation. Often his style and vocabulary echoes that of Eliot.

5. Turning Point. Notes on preparation for the ministry to have formed a book obviously intended to follow Still Point. Glasgow University Library. (August, 1944)

6. Still Point. Pseud. Ronald Maxwell London: Nisbet, 1943. p.52 cf. also p.62 where he refers to the "solitariness of the poet." "Still Point" is taken from some lines of Eliot, The Complete Poems and Plays of T.S. Eliot, Faber, 1969, p.175. Anthony Burgess speaks of Eliot's "mystical 'still point' where history is redeemed by eternity." Titus Groan, Mervyn Peake, Penguin, 1968, Introduction p.9

Dialogue between God and the Soul.

Why did you go? What dark power drove
Your tired heart to this lonely place?
Under my wings you were come to trust.

I went to flee the thrust
Of ecstasy and love:

What have you found?

Freedom and loneliness:
Here no sound
But my stumbling steps in the withered stubble:
I may go where I will.

I dealt with you kindly, why did you go?

I have had my fill,
Started an echo in my gluttoned soul,
Alone amid dry bones,
That will never go.
But now I know -
Not lust for change,
Not trustlessness,
Not to feel the sting
Of strange distress,
But to Thee, to Thee,
To come again,
Again to Thee.

7

We can see in the above poem the dialectic that was to characterise the theology of Gregor Smith. He writes always from the basic existential aloneness of man. But this is always to be understood from the perspective of the encounter with God through the Christ-event.

Later he was to suggest that contemporary society knew this sense of isolation to previously unknown depths.⁸ He described modern society as turning to individualism or collectivism in its failure to discover true community. Gregor Smith never abandoned this concern for true community. It is ultimately given expression in true prayer.

There is unanimous testimony to the depth and intensity of the unity he found in marriage and who can doubt that here was a real source of comfort for this distress.

He married Katherina (Kathe) Elisabeth Helena Wittlake on June 13, 1947, whom he first met during his visit to Munich between September 1934, and July 1935. They had planned to marry in 1939 but their plans were interrupted by the war. These years of waiting heightened Gregor Smith's loneliness. In a radio broadcast about Buber, Gregor Smith referred to marriage

8. Martin Buber. p.25 Existentialist examples giving expression to this would not be hard to find Gregor Smith would perhaps especially have pointed to Satre and Camus. also The Background to the New Man S.C.M. Conference, Swanwick. April 1959, p.8. "The predicament of modern man is characterised by loneliness." Glasgow.

as perhaps the highest expression of the I-Thou relationship which was such an important part of his thought. "In the meeting between people -and especially, I should say, in the full and absolute meeting of marriage - the relation to God is not lost but is properly and truly established." 7

Waiting became a significant theme in his description of the Christian attitude. Again this is a prominent theme in Eliot and appears in Gregor Smith's early poetry:

Waiting I sought, hoping I prayed,
And lingered where hope stayed
Beside that far from faint form, till the sun
Sample red, and day was run.
And though I know my hope is wild,
Alas, unreconciled
I wait still in the expected night
And ever madly storm hope's height
And ever breathless - sheer
To death, nor heed how near
Another waits, as I, and knows
Here death in each day's close:
This straight and fierce are given all
Day's hope's into night's thrall. 10

9. The Way of Wisdom. B.B.C. Third programme , February 1956.

10. Poems. 1941-42, Dated 19.11.41. also History is Personal , p.9. Glasgow

Waiting is a characteristic attitude for human life and again gives expression to prayer. Gregor Smith's existential torment is found frequently in his poetry and in the following poem the closing stanza points right to the heart of his theology:

Breaking pain-torn through the growth
Tangled with sighs, I nothing loth.
Won free, and saw a star
With wheeling course afar
From love's strict tears
Beckoning my years:
But as I rose the star raced down
And lit a circuit like a crown
Round a low thorn, and hung adoring there.
In grief I read the secret of the star
And all its cosmic peers and sun
And earth from which I sought to run,
That to suffering in love
There is no alternative.

11

Many further examples of the note of loneliness could be adduced from these and earlier poems. The following will suffice to illustrate the point:

Impure, discordant, arid is my soul,
Lonely my Being

12

11. Poems. 1941-42, Glasgow.

12. Poems. February - September 1934, No. 1. Glasgow.

I am alone; nothing about me, in me,
Stirs. Aeons of time pass over me,
My heart sinks beneath the weight of silence
As a spent swimmer, gasping, toward the shore
Turns pale face, so I to Thee turn, Lord.

I am not alone, but oh!
Eternity of loneliness, dear God,
In these brief moments of despair
Has my soul scarred, twine twisted,
Than Thou art strong to heal, cunning to unwind:
How canst Thou brook this ceaseless, senseless
emptiness.

Sir, I mean my sin.

13

The deeps of space behind me closed beyond,
Stared with unseeing eyes: the emptiness
And utter, uncomplacent loneliness

14

As we shall see this inward turmoil is reflected in the material on Preparing for the Ministry, which in 1938 and 1943-44, was marked by important decisions regarding his future.

13. *ibid.* No.2

14. *ibid.* No.5

In his treatment both of Martin Buber and of Johann Georg Hamann, Gregor Smith speaks of lives that have been lived as expressions of their thought.¹⁵ This is true notably of Gregor Smith himself, especially in the earlier years where he quite consciously chose his style of being. For our purposes it is sufficient to note some of the critical "turning points" in Gregor Smith's life and work. The three that are selected are illustrative of the theme of this thesis. Encounter is the basis of reality. Its characteristic expression is conversion, which is the entry in faith into a relationship with God through the event of Jesus Christ. It will be argued that conversion produces a significant change. Conversion is the entry into the New Being, the New Age, the Kingdom. Although conversion has such a decisive character it is not necessarily a single event. Gregor Smith's life seems to indicate a progressive "turning" to a particular direction.

15. Martin Buber. p.9, R. Gregor Smith, J.G. Hamann A Study in Christian Existence. whole treatment.

The earliest incident is reflected on in Turning Point. This collection of autobiographical thoughts is in both manuscript and typescript and obviously grew over a period of time.¹⁶ It is interesting that Turning Point began before the publication of Still Point, although not under that name, for it does indeed indicate a turning away from Gregor Smith's "apologia".¹⁷

Gregor Smith recognised that as a child the expectations that surrounded him pointed in the direction of ministry but even at that stage he recognised the inadequacy of the image of the "dark cloaked figure of the parish priest." Nevertheless he does describe at some length an encounter in which "otherness" confronted him, "as my first solid positive experience, dare I say, of Christianity" ¹⁸ The poetic note is quite clear here and some may discount this early experience as mere nostalgia or romanticism. "Otherness" as a possibility within the ordinary realm of life is a prominent theme throughout the early pages of Preparing for The Ministry leading to the conclusion that "there is no division between one world and another" and that "God is where his world is."¹⁹

16. There is a type draft of some material dating back to 31.8.38.

17. Still Point. p.60.

18. Turning Point. p.1, also quoted in full by Clements, p.3.

19. *ibid* p.7.

"This attraction of the hidden possibilities of ordinary life, which had early filled me with a kind of awe or reverence before life, continued the determinative influence throughout my university career, and reinforced by two concurrent influences. It is only now that I have come to see that they were contradictory influences and that neither was adequate." ²⁰

These two influences Gregor Smith chose to call "Christendom" and (evangelical) "Christianity". The first includes his whole aesthetic awareness, including Wordsworth and Goethe, Beethoven and Debussy. In his English studies at Edinburgh, where he gained a M.A. with first class honours in Language and Literature, it became focused especially in the seventeenth century metaphysical poets, notably John Donne and George Herbert. Herbert's Priest to the Temple he described as his "handbook to divinity." ²¹

The other influence was an involvement, together with his friend, Henry Thornton, in an aggressively evangelical expression of his faith. He describes this here from this perspective; "What arrogant and self-confident and tiresome creatures we must have been." ²²

He began some of the material which was drawn together in Turning Point towards the end of his eight year preparation for the ministry, which he describes as the

20. *ibid.* p.9.

21. *ibid.* p.11.

22. *ibid.* p.14.

"highest calling in the world".²³ It seems that he seriously considered not being ordained. "For they are written by one who has spent the last eight years preparing for the ministry and has now decided to abandon his intention."²⁴ Perhaps it was his year in Copenhagen and his wrestling with Kierkegaard that led him to go ahead after all. Still Point was his apologia for the style of ministry and indeed life which was drawn very much out of these influences and particularly that of Herbert. Style will be discussed below. This first "turning" then began in childhood and grew throughout his university years, it was an awareness of the "other" which he finally sought to bring to realisation in the life of a poet/priest which brought him to Selkirk. But it led him to a life detached from the realities of life and the tension he felt about this became focused in the decision concerning army chaplaincy. Still Point was a defence of this way of seeking to live in relation to God. The year following its publication he became an army chaplain. Eternal issues became focused in this individual decision. Gregor Smith comments on the influence of Kierkegaard:

"If I may say in one sentence what his effect has been on myself it is this: he is the questioner who never abandons his questions; he compels his associates to return continually to examine the foundations of their security and he sweeps away all pretence, leaving you shivering in the nakedness of an absolute demand: he

23. *ibid.* p.1

24. *idem.*

is, it seems to me, the one who exposes the quivering nerves of our society and in the anguish of that operation proposes the way we must go: it is not a way of security and it relies neither on a vague remote heaven nor on a prosperous earth, but somewhere else, nearer in the heart of the Eukelte, the single one, he purposes to uncover the reality of belief. Even a true community, as opposed to a collectivity, realises its nature only by means of each Eukelte, each solitary single one making his own way to the truth and being concerned personally with God and the single human being."²⁵

So if the first turning was a process of turning to God, then the second was continuing to follow after God, but it was marked by his decision to leave the pastorate for the army and began a process of turning from the church to the world in order to find God.

There were many theological influences on Gregor Smith of whom I believe the most influential was Johann Georg Hamann. Many of these influences will be encountered throughout the theological discussion. I want to mention here an influence that might be described as our third turning point and seems to me to be confirmatory of Gregor Smith's movement from Church to world, which later also found confirmation in Bonhoeffer.

Two papers indicate the direction Gregor Smith was searching in at the time he came to Bonn as Education Officer for the University. One was an unpublished, but crucial essay, History is Personal,²⁶ and the other

25. *ibid* p.16

26. History Is Personal. Unpublished essay of about 9,000 words. Glasgow University Library.

Mr. Eliot's 'The Family ReUnion' in the Light of Martin
Buber's 'I and Thou.' ²⁷

Clements comments;

"This paper is symptomatic of a deep and increasing concern by Gregor Smith to work out a doctrine of what is traditionally called "salvation" in terms of man's personal being in history. But further influences were to come upon him, and while in Bonn he felt the impact of two continental figures who arrested his attention - the first certainly for the next few years, the second for the rest of his life."²⁸

These figures were Karl Jaspers and Rudolf Bultmann. The significance of Bultmann for Gregor Smith is beyond question. In the New Man, which in the view of this thesis is the seminal public writing of Gregor Smith's career, he relies upon Bultmann for his view of Paul's conversion. ²⁹ Repeatedly in the New Testament sections of his Atonement lectures he relies heavily on Bultmann's exegesis. In The Doctrine of God he refers to Bultmann's "great commentary on the Gospel according to St. John." ³⁰ As Eugene Long reminds us in his Introduction to God, Secularisation and History Gregor Smith was "fond of saying that he was so indebted to the thoughts of Bultmann that he was scarcely able to

27. Published in Theology, 50 (February 47)pp.59-64.

28. Clements. op. cit. p.46.

29. New Man R. Gregor Smith, S.C.M., 1956.

30. The Doctrine of God R. Gregor Smith, Collins, 1968

disentangle them from his own." ³¹ It is perhaps all the more significant therefore that he chose independently to take his philosophical cue from Jaspers rather than Heidegger. Bultmann's espousal of Heidegger's atheistic philosophical framework is well known. In A Warning about Kierkegaard Gregor Smith describes Jaspers and Heidegger as the two developments of the Kierkegaardian existentialism and makes clear his preference for Jaspers "existential Christian philosophy/theology." ³² In his review of Jaspers' The Perennial Scope of Philosophy Gregor Smith refers to Jaspers' existentialism as "a way of thinking that is also a way of being: philosophical faith." ³³ It is the contention of this thesis that the encounter with Jaspers gave a crucial sense of direction to Gregor Smith's work away from the Church as the fulfilment of the New Age, the appearance of the New Man, and towards the world.

31. Long. op. cit. p.viii. Long gives the text of a letter from Rudolf Bultmann expressing his respect for Ronald Gregor Smith, in which we may note that he points to the seminal nature of The New Man. "For by 'anthropology' he (Gregor Smith) does not mean a dogmatic special doctrine. Anthropology means for him a reflection on the nature of man, a reflection which has universal theological interest and relates to all theological themes." also Secular Christianity, p.9.

32. A Warning about Kierkegaard Scottish Periodical 1.2, Summer 1948. p.81.

33. Karl Jaspers on Theology and Philosophy Hibbert Journal 49, (Oct. 1950) p. 62.

So, for example, in this same review we see an expression which surely points towards The New Man "The failure of man might indeed be the subtitle of Jaspers' book. But it is a failure in which man's significance that is his potentialities are expressed." ³⁴ It is not intended to suggest that Jaspers was the only influence by any means, simply that it came at a critical point and gave a lasting direction to the whole of Gregor Smith's work. Gregor Smith translated The European Spirit and published it first of all in the ill-fated Scottish Periodical, and later in its own right, with a lengthy introduction which is more an exposition of Gregor Smith's view of history than anything else. There he describes Jaspers as "the most responsible and central of the German existentialist philosophers." ³⁵ There is at the outset of this introduction a reminder also how significant Donald Baillie's God was in Christ was to Gregor Smith. We shall see its influence both in his use of paradox and in his development of his thought on the Atonement. Here he is mentioned in connection with the central place of Christ in history, thus bringing theology into the secular realm. ³⁶ This Gregor Smith regards as being a genuine continuation of the biblical

34. *ibid.* p.63.

35. Karl Jaspers The European Spirit S.C.M., 1948.

36. D.M. Baillie God was in Christ. Faber & Faber, 1956. p.71-79

"Hebrew" view. "History on this view is made when God meets man." ³⁷

According to Gregor Smith, Jaspers recognises that Christianity lies behind European history in the past but fails to relate the present and the future to these historical events. Kierkegaard's question and the relation of the present to the past is very clearly present here. Gregor Smith's view of history is explored more fully below in the chapter on Eschatology. We may note the consistently personal nature of his understanding. "How may this personal relation, which is spoken of as the breeding ground of all true human life and purpose be brought about? How does one become a Christian?" ³⁸ He makes reference to Cook-Wilson as an anticipation of the personalist and existentialist perceptions which arise on the Continent.³⁹ He speaks of encounter with God as a given fact, "a bit of men's history"⁴⁰ for European man. This leads him on to a very important statement about the nature of faith;

"Our civilisation is still fundamentally Christian, in the sense that its traditions and sanctions of conduct and sources of inspiration are bound up with energies and attitudes which are primarily Christian. And however far from the surface of his thoughts direct Christian teaching and claims may be, modern European

37. Jaspers. op. cit. p.15.

38. ibid. p.21.

39. N. Smart, Ed., Historical Selections in the Philosophy of Religion, S.C.M., 1962, pp.439ff.

40. Jaspers op. cit. p.22.

man is still aware in the depth of his heart of that teaching and those claims." ⁴¹

One of the questions that might be raised against Gregor Smith is just how far he intended an identification between the possibilities of the New Man and western society as Jaspers describes it. It seems certain that if he was able to write thus in nineteen forty eight little that has occurred since would have affected his view. In the following passage the lines of development indicated for a form of existentialism, better Christian existence, which could be a hope for Europe, in fact indicate the interpretation of Gregor Smith's theology followed in this thesis. Particular notice being given to History is Personal, 1938; The New Man, 1956; and his Lectures on the Atonement, 1957, revised 1962.

"If we were concerned here with Christianity in itself we should have to examine the precise nature of the claims made by this life which we call the life of the God-man. The nature of the meaning this life gives to sin, and suffering, death and love, would have to be clarified. A doctrine of the Atonement would have to be set forth. The inner structure of the claim that this Jesus is the "centre" of history would have to be exposed by argument in relation to sin and death and the divine providence." ⁴²

41. *ibid.* p.26. Although Gregor Smith would not be pleased it is difficult not to be reminded of John Baillie's broadening of the terms of Christian knowledge with the use of "With the top of his mind" and "in the bottom of his heart". Cf. Our Knowledge of God O.U.P., 1939, p.47ff

42. *ibid.* p.27.

SECTION ONE

Chapter One: Theological Approach

One indication that the personal angst we highlighted in the Introduction forms a significant background to Gregor Smith's theology is that it is highlighted in his approach to Apologetics. Gregor Smith is undoubtedly a christian theologian and there are points at which his concept of faith seems to disregard or even confront the necessity for a rational defence of Christianity. And yet it is clear that his whole theological effort was bent towards making his theology as clearly rational as possible. He is concerned with making Christianity intelligible. ¹ In this sense of apologetics they are "right in the middle of the Christian life" and a "risk"² to be taken. The danger of apologetics is that the Christian answer may be derived simply from the question put by the specific situation addressed. It is, therefore, necessary to keep the concept of the "message of an incarnational theology" at the heart of belief. Gregor Smith's plan for his apologetics' course is to deal successively with the New Testament material and then with the work of Tillich, Bultmann and Bonhoeffer.

1. Indeed in an article of that title, Is Christianity Intelligible?, Theology 58, p.124-128, also given as a radio broadcast, (cf. Glasgow, F.12/h) he uses some of his apologetics material for just this task.

2. Apologetics. Lectures in Systematic Theology III, Glasgow, p.5.

In his approach to Bultmann he gives an illuminating critique of Heidegger, which underlines his preference for Jaspers and indicates some limitations in his approach to Bultmann. Of all three major theological figures discussed he is critical, while recognising that they all have important contributions to make.

He deals with the New Testament material by looking at the words; world, holiness and age.

World. Gregor Smith discerns four distinct but related meanings of world in the New Testament. The first is the whole of creation, which presents a view of creation which leaves no room for a dualistic interpretation of the world. Second is the world of men and thirdly the world as opposed to God. "It is not a philosophical understanding of the nature of being but rather a historical description of what the New Testament actually finds in existence." ³ The fourth is the world as the object of God's love. This leaves the Christian community in a situation of tension because being in the world it shares in sin, yet it "remains in responsibility to the king." ⁴

Holiness. This is given to the christian. It relates primarily to his separation from the world.

3. Apologetics. p.14a.

4. ibid. p.16a.

"To sum the matter up the fundamental distinction between the Christian Community and the world is that which appears when the Christian community, in obedience to its mission, acts towards the world (which is hostile to God) in this twofold way, of being against it because it is for it." ⁵

In this sense we could say that the church is an eschatological community. It is constituted by the Christ-event, which, we shall see repeatedly, is for Gregor Smith the End, the end of history. The church looks towards this End. It therefore has no institutional claim to be the church but rather only this eschatological relationship. It therefore has an existential relation to the world. This necessary relationship to the world is an event which constitutes the church as a real community.

Age. Gregor Smith indicates that we are dealing with the Latin word saeculum (Gk. aión). In the New Testament we find concern with two ages; the age to come is discovered to be present in the present age. This "new age" is visible only to faith and differs from the present age in its view of the End. There is much in Gregor Smith's view of the two ages which is compatible with much contemporary evangelical language concerning the Kingdom. ⁶

At the close of the Introduction it was suggested that

5. *ibid.* p.17a.

6. e.g. The Upside-down Kingdom. D.B. Kraybill, Marshalls, 1978 p.31-34.

Gregor Smith might be accused of placing too much emphasis on European society. As he turns here from the New Testament material to Tillich's thought, he first of all looks at Tillich's use of theonomous, heteronomous and autonomous approaches to society as laid out in The Protestant Era ⁷ Gregor Smith comments in particular concerning the autonomy of modern man;

"All the world is under the influence of western society, in one form or another, and there is nothing to take its place. The hope of civilisation today rests upon an inner recovery, and upon nothing at all from outside it. Nothing, that is humanly speaking." ⁸

Tillich's approach to apologetic theology, Gregor Smith describes as a correlation which involves both the message and the situation. For himself he prefers to speak of an encounter between the two. Tillich's apologetic theology points to an "ultimate concern" which is

" the touch stone of all true theological concern. This ultimate concern which is unconditional, total and finite is an existential concern with object, not simply as object but as living subject. We receive the message within our own situation. That is why every generation must make its own theology." ⁹

Every generation must make its own theology.

7. The Protestant Era P. Tillich, London, Nisbet. 1951. also The New Man ch.3, p.50-69.

8. Apologetics. p.29-30. Also British Theology Today, A paper for German theological students, Glasgow, p.3. Where he describes T.S. Eliot and Martin Buber as "the common heritage of European culture." also The New Man p.94

9. ibid. p.34-35. Also G.Ebeling The Nature of Faith Collins, 1961, p.11. D.M. Baillie, God was in Christ, Faber and Faber, 1956, p.68.

It is here especially that we are given clear sight of Gregor Smith's theological purpose. As we shall see below when we look at Scripture and in detail in Chapter Three where we deal with The New Man, Gregor Smith's central theological concern is with the question of man. The discussion of the new age above indicates this direction. As Gregor Smith turns from Tillich he develops the picture of the "homeless man".¹⁰ This he sees as being a central question throughout biblical history, throughout the life of the christian community and in the contemporary scene. He develops it with reference to Augustine, Pascal, and Eliot and also with a number of references to The New Man. In Chapter Two we propose to look more closely at the concept of personhood in relation to both man and God. In Chapter Three we shall deal more fully with man. It is necessary to note here that man cannot be adequately described without relation to God and this relation is described by faith for Gregor Smith. Faith precedes theology. Theology is a participatory activity. We have already seen that it must be done anew by every generation. It must be done

10. Apologetics p.43. "The great characteristic of our time, underlying all others, is the homelessness of man." p.54. "The real question christianity may be expected to face and in some way answer is the question of man's being.", this is "the crying question of our day".

in faith. In an address to an S.C.M. students conference Gregor Smith described his own life as "trying to live by faith."¹¹ In a review of Anselm. Fides Quaerens Intellectum.¹² he appreciates the value of its translation, but comments that it perhaps reveals more about Barth's own approach than Anselm's. However I believe Gregor Smith is also prepared to see theology as faith in search of understanding.¹³ In a similar way, when he speaks of the Atonement, we may experience forgiveness before we can speak of it. So at the beginning of his lectures on Atonement he asserts there that theology is sui generis¹⁴

11. The Nature of Faith. p.1 Swanwick, July 1961. Glasgow. also Reflections on the task of Theology Today 12.3.56, Glasgow: "Theology is never an academic discipline, a kind of balcony-view of divine history. But it is personal involvement in certain facts which at the same time demand a decision. It is personal involvement in historical events in such a way that the events become history all over again. They repeat themselves in you." p.1, K. Clements, op. cit. p.202.

12. Review of Anselm. Fides Quaerens Intellectum, Karl Barth, S.C.M., 1960. Glasgow.

13. Introduction to Theology, Glasgow, p.1, 14, 21 "Theology, therefore, like faith of which it is the articulation, does not find its given in any unalterable historical form, whether of creed or dogma." also Secular Christianity R.Gregor Smith. Collins 1966, p.61-62 and The Doctrine of God R. Gregor Smith, Collins, 1970, p.174

14. Atonement, Glasgow, p.1-2. "you believe before you theologise theology has a style and a method which is proportionate to the kind of faith which is held by the theologian." also What is real life?, Theology, Sept 44, p.205 "There is nothing else for it but to hold the faith in the living Word's truth." and A Warning about Kierkegaard Scottish Periodical 1/2 p.80.

Theology must be done anew; it is participatory, it is sui generis, it is totally dialectical, ¹⁵ it is faith in search of understanding. Faith, in turn, is an event, an activity, a submission, a decision, ¹⁶ and to be "encountered and offered in the midst of the human situation." ¹⁷ It leads on to christian action and is in deed lived experience. ¹⁸

Gregor Smith criticises the directness of encounter in both Baillie and Buber, ¹⁹ and this can be looked at more closely in Chapter Two. He is clear that faith is a

15. What is Real Life?, Theology 47, p.204 "theology, therefore, is not reduced to silence but to dialectic - that is to the saying of apparently contradictory things, to indirect statement, to dramatic presentation, to the use of dialogue and irony." p.206 "if you begin with yourself (as Descartes did) you can never really get beyond yourself; you are stuck in the mud of solipsism. And if you begin with God's pure being you can never reach yourself or the world, which remain at the very least infected with unreality. But if you begin as Buber does, with the relation, with God sustaining his creation, then you move all the time within the relation and finally in the relation you come to dwell. Nothing can be proved in this; the most that may be done is that the relation may be confirmed in action."

16. The Nature of Faith, Glasgow, p.3-4 also How does the Christian Know?, Religion in Education, Autumn 1955, p.5. Christian Faith and Secularism, Glasgow, Oct. 1965 p.1

17. Apologetics p.125

18. The Nature of Christian Action, Glasgow, p. 1.

19. The Nature of Faith. p.6, also The Free Man, R. Gregor Smith, Collins, 1969, p.17-18. The Doctrine of God, R. Gregor Smith, Collins, 1970, p.127-128. cf. John Baillie, Our Knowledge of God, O.U.P., 1939, p.126. The Sense of the Presence of God, O.U.P., 1962, p.18. Martin Buber, I and Thou, Scribner's, 1958, p.14ff. The Eclipse of God, Victor Gollancz Ltd. 1953, p.40.

relation not a possession, and it is inevitably bound to the paradox of the christian faith. Before we consider paradox it is necessary to look at the question of language and then of scripture.

It was suggested above that the most important influence on Gregor Smith was Johann Georg Hamann. ²⁰ I believe that this was true theologically, philosophically and as a life model. Hamann was very involved in the debate concerning the origin and nature of language, particularly with his close friend Herder. In the context of discussing the loss of a 'history-like' or realistic character of biblical narrative, Hans Frei points out that Herder's "persuasion that poetry is the mother tongue of the human race." ²¹ came from Hamann. This is not to underestimate their serious disagreement over the development of language. There is a significant link between language, poetry, style and reality which is crucial to the understanding of Gregor Smith's theology. For much of his career Gregor Smith sought to produce a theology free from the domination of metaphysics. Later he came to recognise that some metaphysic is necessary but that Christianity is not tied to a particular one. Generally he preferred the term reality to that of Being.

20. cf. above p.16.

21. Hans Frei, The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative, Yale University Press, 1974. p.183.

As early as Still Point, speaking about the attempt to express the ineffable in language, he points to the freedom for the poet's words to stand in their own right.²² Later he claims that the three forms of language, faith and God are not separable.²³ Language is the concrete sign of our historicity. It describes the givenness of our situation. Language is indeed the heart of our situation.

"language expresses our understanding of the past in terms of a present event, which is not a subjective or private or interior experience merely, but is a public event."²⁴

In an article discussing the work of Martin Buber, Gregor Smith claims there is no ultimate distinction between language and reality.²⁵ This is linked, as we saw above,²⁶ to the dialectical character of theology. The closeness of the relation between man's language and God's speech or Word is illustrated by the fact that Gregor Smith is prepared to speak of a "real analogy

22. Still Point p.12.

23. The New Man p.116.

24. The Doctrine of God p.31.

25. What is Real Life? p.206. "In the end life cannot be proved or argued about but only lived; and in the living of it words pass to and fro as the binding, sustaining creating power, themselves given meaning and life from the Word of words."

26. above p.29

here, that is an analogy of being." ²⁷

Two things in particular were of influence from Hamann's view of the Word for Gregor Smith. The first was the importance of the Bible and its relationship to experience. The other was the eschatological significance of the Logos. Although Gregor Smith's interest in Hamann came because of his influence on Kierkegaard, Gregor Smith notes the help he derived from a work of Ferdinand Ebner. He quotes Ebner as saying,

"St. John the Evangelist was the first - Hamann perhaps the second - to see the inner connection of man's spiritual life with the Word (whose divine origin he recognised) and with Jesus." ²⁸

We shall see in Chapter Five just how crucial this eschatological aspect is. Scripture gave, for Hamann, the clue to all other speech. "So language is the clue to Hamann's view of all existence". ²⁹ There is an intimate link between language, experience and revelation which reflects in Gregor Smith's own approach to Scripture. The following longer quote, summarising Gregor Smith's understanding of Hamann's doctrine of the

27. R. Gregor Smith, A Beginning with Hamann A Note on his Theory of Language, Glasgow, p.6. also The Living and Speaking God. A Study in Hamann's Doctrine of the Word. Hibbert Journal 42, April 1944, p.127-136 Secular Christianity, p.123, The Doctrine of God, p.103.

28. Ferdinand Ebner, Das Wort und die geistigen. Rengsburg, 1921. p.21. quoted in A Beginning with Hamann. A Note on His Theory of Language, Glasgow p.2

29. R.Gregor Smith, J.G. Hamann A Study in Christian Existence Collins, 1960, p.69.

Word, indicates very clearly Gregor Smith's own approach to the dependence of authentic human, personal existence on the Word:

"In sum, then, we can say that for Hamann revelation comes through the senses, it is grounded upon sense experience, and it is a Word to the whole of human existence. Human existence is what it can be only when it is turned out from itself into the whole action of God in his creation. Man's life is therefore to be seen as a reaction to God's action, a response to his Word. It is as participants in a conversation with God, in and through conversation with the whole of creation that men come to God, and so, incidentally, come to themselves."

30

All of Hamann's works were written pseudonomously and so were a number of the earlier works of Kierkegaard. It is not insignificant that Gregor Smith's first two published works were also pseudonomous. It focuses on a significant factor for Gregor Smith in doing theology that of indirectness and style. The poet and the theologian have much in common. We have seen the existential aspect of Gregor Smith's poetry at some length. Theology, like poetry, stands in its own right. Both possess a certain indirectness as part of their essential nature. Gregor Smith described Kierkegaard's Concluding Unscientific Postscript as "the locus classicus for the elaboration of the necessity of indirectness in theology"³¹ Gregor Smith always remained closer to Hamann than to Kierkegaard possibly

30. *ibid.* p.79

31. What is Real Life?, Theology 47, September, 1944. p.204

because he felt Kierkegaard abandoned indirectness, whereas Hamann always retained it. For Hamann language expressed the relationship of man to God in his total dependence for existence.³² There is no ultimate distinction between language and reality. "Speech is creation and call from God: He makes spirit in man and calls him to life through His Word."³³ God's speech and man's are genuinely analogous and as God speaks indirectly, in parables and allegories, so man's speech is indirect. Here the question of style which I believe is of major importance in Gregor Smith's work may be discussed.

Ronald Gregor Smith translated Martin Buber's "I and Thou" whilst at Edinburgh, reading theology under John Baillie. Much of Buber's work too, and Gregor Smith was reputed to be his best translator, was in a "poetic style". It would be difficult to overestimate the influence of the ideas focused in "I and Thou" on Gregor Smith's programme of work. It introduces a distinction to Gregor Smith's thought which I believe is fundamental to everything he says, yet at the same time is ambiguous: the distinction between life and real life, between humanity and true humanity, between existence and genuine existence, between society and community.

32. J.G. Hamann. p.81.

33. A Beginning with Hamann, Glasgow, p.6.

God is the person in whom truth and reality coincide. We can know truth only as we are encountered by it. "All real living is meeting".³⁴ So the characteristically human posture is waiting. We wait as we concentrate on reality. That is as we give our attention to what actually happens to us in the present, in our personal history which is the basis of all history, and of all reality.

"I said to my soul, be still, and wait without hope
For hope would be hope for the wrong thing; wait
without love
For love would be love of the wrong thing; There is yet
faith
But the faith and the love and the hope are all in the
waiting."

35

The poetic image was a very important one to Gregor Smith particularly in his early work, although he never abandoned these formative influences. We have seen the existential aspect of his poetic character and its influence on his approach to apologetics. The idea of "style" though, goes deeper still and pervades all his work. There is the idea that theology is itself creative of the encounter which enhances or authenticates existence.

34. Martin Buber, I and Thou p.11.

35. T.S. Eliot, East Coker III. The Complete Poems and Plays of T.S. Eliot, Faber. p.180. Also quoted in History is Personal p.9 An unpublished essay of Gregor Smith of about 9,000 words.

Still Point, his first book to be published, under the pseudonym Ronald Maxwell, drew its title from some lines of Eliot also in the Four Quartets, in Burnt Norton IV. In the reference to "History is Personal" ³⁶ the quotation is from T.S. Eliot's East Coker, which begins, "In my beginning is my end." This is reminiscent of the words of Goethe, also quoted in "History is Personal" and set at the head of "I and Thou" ;

"So, waiting, I have won from you the end:
God's presence in each element."

Buber's own poetic style, as well as his content, surely had an influence on Ronald Gregor Smith. The pseudonymity of his first two books is arguably a direct imitation of Hamann and Kierkegaard. Clements speaks of Gregor Smith's attempt to imitate the life of George Herbert, ³⁷ and it should be remembered that Gregor Smith read English literature, achieving a first class honours degree, before he read theology. The poetic style pervades all his work. It is perhaps not too much to claim that real life itself, the encountered life, was a matter of style.

There is a marked difference between the published and unpublished work of Gregor Smith. He would not have

36. History is Personal, Glasgow, p.9

37. K. Clements, op. cit. p.23. : also Turning Point, Glasgow, p.4 "That, then, seemed to me then to be the aim of my studies, the goal of my life, to live as such a one as George Herbert."

approved of an effort like this to understand his work in terms of traditional terminology. He firmly believed that traditional terminology was "tired", that it was no longer meaningful to contemporary society. All his published work studiously attempts to present the Christian message in contemporary terms. In a "style" which would possibly enable the kind of encounter which gives as a gift this new awareness or sight of faith.

In much of his university teaching and unpublished writings the relation between old and new language is made explicit. It is clear that Gregor Smith was conscious of the importance of students for ministry at Glasgow University and here the need to relate his thought to traditional terminology is greatest. Nevertheless a certain style remains throughout. Style is the essence of originality, claritas, in Aquinas.³⁸ If we turn to the unpublished essay, History is Personal, we will be able to give the distinction drawn from Buber a clearer definition.

Gregor Smith wrote History is Personal during his time at Selkirk. This essay written at approximately the same time as Still Point has much in common with it. I believe it is a central key to understanding his thought. He changed the title from "Personal History"

38. Still Point p.16.

and also the subtitle:

" An edifying discussion mainly
in one mood
written for
the solitary man."

Originally this went on to say "by the other". A reference to Gregor Smith's sense of standing in line with Hamann and Kierkegaard, more so the former than the latter, as well as a reflection of the fact that it is ultimately the history of the person that constitutes reality. It points again to the significance of the single one, taken from Kierkegaard, and indeed this subtitle is followed by a quotation from Kierkegaard;

"To the individual..... who you are I do not know; where you are I do not know; what your name is I do not know - I do not even know if you exist, or perhaps did exist but exist no more, or if possibly your time will one day come." ³⁹

The essay begins with an introductory apology about terminology. Here the question of style is made explicit. "Truth cannot be communicated as an ordered whole..... The best communication is therefore that which does not aim at communication, but simply at illumination." ⁴⁰ This is Gregor Smith's first attempt at indirect communication which he immediately adjudges

39. Kierkegaard. Papirer VII 176.

This may be further illustrated from "Still Point": "In this way, far from lifting myself or my readers out of 'the turning world' I have sought rather to meet them in its deeper meaning, at the still point of solitude that is at the heart of all real life."

40. History is Personal Glasgow, p.1 also Atonement, Glasgow. p.143.

to be a partial failure, in as much as in the introduction and postscript he felt "bound to present the reader more directly with the demand for a true inner christian action."⁴¹

Having looked at language, and at the question of indirectness and style we may now look at Gregor Smith's view of the place of Scripture before finally in this chapter making note of his use of paradox.

Reference to scripture is to be found throughout Gregor Smith's work. Substantial sections of his university lectures are exegetical in character. Chapter Three will show how thoroughly his theological anthropology is grounded in an interpretation of scripture. Gregor Smith criticises Heidegger's analysis of being on the basis of his taking a too limited situation for analysis, that is the individual life of man in isolation. ⁴² We have made much of the existential loneliness of man, but that must always be in the context of the situation of man in relation to God and to other men as given primarily in the Bible. Gregor Smith agrees with Heidegger in terms of the fundamentally phenomenological approach, analysis must begin with the given. The given for Gregor Smith is controlled by the Word of God, the Christ event which is

41. *ibid.*

42. Apologetics, Glasgow, p.66-67.

witnessed to in the Bible, and in tradition. ⁴³

In his lectures on the Atonement Gregor Smith gives a summary of the attitude to Scripture that is to be adopted in his study of the atonement. ⁴⁴ This is significant in that he lays great emphasis on the evidence of scripture for his argument and continues to do so throughout these lectures. He comes very close to Barth's thought at several points and makes specific reference to him again in the second point. He adduces five guidelines to the right attitude to scripture.

1. Communion is not just communication. It is given in the event of Christ. It will not become clear until later that here there is a reference to the eschatological significance of preaching the Christ - event based upon scripture, as well as the historical events which are the ground of faith.

2. Scripture is human attempts to reproduce this primary Word of God. It is the response of Israel to God's action in history. Responsible living is essentially living in response to the revelation of God in Christ.

43. Apologetics p.59. Here is a summary of the argument of The New Man in which he makes clear the relationship between the Bible, history and human experience. This corresponds very closely with what has been noted above about Hamann's influence re. language. also Our Understanding of the Bible as the Word of God., Glasgow and the Doctrine of God ch.1, esp. p.28, 35. where the relation of scripture and tradition to Revelation are made very clear.

44. Atonement p.68-71.

3. The Bible is in a special relation to the Word. The response is part of the work of God.

"God's Word is an event, which takes the form of a dynamic situation. God's word enters a situation, and changes it from what it is: it brings life in the sense that it offers the choice between life and death."

45

The bible is an incomparable witness.

4. The centre of the bible, the reality which makes it a unity, is Christ.

"It is not itself Christ. But in the same breath we must say only in and through the Bible do we find a way to Christ." "...again and again we go back to the Bible in order to find our way to Christ who is the living way."

46

This is particularly important as the idea of the Word, which comes to us through the Christ-event pervades Gregor Smith's work but as we shall see in Chapter Four it is an elusive concept. Yet here he appears to be relatively specific. Christ controls so much of Gregor Smith's thought that we are entitled to ask where may we meet this Christ? If it is indeed true that his view of Christ is to be controlled by Scripture and that it is only through Christ that we may speak of forgiveness, and this new creation is entered through faith, and that without faith man is not only fallen, but less than human, suddenly we are standing before a remarkably evangelical position.

45. *ibid.* p.69.

46. *ibid.* p.70. also The Doctrine of God p.35.

5. "This being so we may further say that the purpose of the Bible is to lead us always beyond itself, but always through itself, to a living relationship with Christ. But Christ is never in vacuo, he cannot be reached as a kind of objective separated fact." 47

He then goes on in this section to speak of the need for the Spirit to illumine the Bible. There are here real affinities with the thought of Calvin. 48

Like scripture, there is reference throughout Gregor Smith's work to the paradox of Christian faith. In History and Faith he highlights two areas that have received new prominence as a result of the work of Kierkegaard. 49 Traditionally paradox has been viewed as seemingly self contradictory. 50

"In Kierkegaard there is only one paradox, and that is the coming into history of God - the God-man is the paradox" 51

Gregor Smith here speaks of paradox as being entirely historical, that is both personalised and non-speculative. He takes this idea of the one paradox centrally into his own theology, but not simply as Kierkegaard himself took it. Again we find him closer to

47. *ibid.* p.71.

48. John Calvin Institutes of the Christian Religion Vols XX & XXI of The Library of Christian Classics, Ed.J.T. McNeill, Westminster, 1977, I.7.4

49. Modern Studies in the Life of Jesus II History and Faith, Glasgow. p.4. The other was eschatology.

50. *ibid.* also R.W. Hepburn Christianity and Paradox, Watts, 1958p.18-20 and F. Ferre, Language, Logic and God, Collins, 1962 p.75ff.

51. *ibid.*

Hamann than Kierkegaard.⁵² He also contrasts Kierkegaard's use of paradox with that of Bultmann.⁵³

Paradox for Gregor Smith is intimately bound to the decision called for by the Christ-event. It is not strictly capable of expression but of apprehension.

"First, paradox: I can put this matter quite briefly for our present purpose. For Christian faith there is only one paradox. It is the forgiving action of God in Christ. This is not irrational or absurd. You know very well what forgiveness is."⁵⁴

This paradox is totally grounded in Christ. It is described most fully in the lectures on Atonement and another quotation cannot be avoided:

"At all costs we must retain the twofold insight which is at the heart of the life and death of Christ; that he is absolutely for men, and absolutely man, at the same time as he is absolutely identified with God. This is the heart of the christian insight, and the source of the one great paradox of God forgiving and renewing his creature man."⁵⁵

It is then both historical and tied to the Word of God in forgiveness, the atonement. It is very surprising that Keith Clements makes no reference to the influence

52. J.G.Hamann p.45, 65.

53. Hamann and Kierkegaard in Zeit und Geschichte: Dankesgabe an Rudolf Bultmann zum 80. Geburtstag J.C.B. Mohr, 1964, p.681.

54. The New Man p.19, also The Nature of Faith, Glasgow, S.C.M. conference Swanwick, on which the chapter in New Man is based. Atonement, Glasgow, p.33-34, 117e. Doctrine of God p.75.

55. Atonement p.67.

of Donald Baillie's God was in Christ on Gregor Smith for it was profound. He described it as "one of the real books on atonement in our time." ⁵⁶ The argument of this thesis is that the Atonement is absolutely central to Gregor Smith's theology and in this sense Baillie's influence is to be reckoned a major one. Paradox is bound to the atonement and to history. The paradoxical nature of the incarnation is that the Christ-event is both the end and the beginning of history. ⁵⁷

It is in Secular Christianity that the relationship is most clearly seen between the Christ-event in history and personal freedom. The Christ-event calls for a decision. It is the making of this decision which is the making of history. It is also the making of persons. This decision in response to God's call or demand is a free decision, yet, paradoxically it is also a gift of the Word which gives the call. "This is a truly paradoxical situation, for what we now see is that the response of faith is a free response, while at the same time it is the forgiving Word which sets us free." ⁵⁸

To be free is the essence of being a person and to this we may now turn.

56. D.M. Baillie, God was in Christ Faber & Faber, 1956. cf. Atonement p.107. Paradox is a major motif for Baillie, cf. Ch.5 The Paradox of the Incarnation.

57. Secular Christianity p.8 also The New Man p.49 and Atonement p.5 in the Coda.

58. *ibid.* p.35f, 56f.

Chapter Two: Personhood.

In the Introduction and opening Chapter I have tried to show that Gregor Smith's theology is grounded in Scripture and this will be underlined in the next Chapter. It is a dialectical theology which is built around the single paradox of God in Christ forgiving. Throughout it assumes that personal relationships between God and man are possible and therefore that in some sense both God and man are personal. Historically this is the area of thought that first attracted me to Gregor Smith's theology, through an acquaintance with Martin Buber. Gregor Smith is not entirely uncritical of personalist theology, particularly as he sees it expressed in Buber and in John Baillie.

The central question for Gregor Smith, for theology, is the question of man. "The Creator's greatest gift to man, that of the personal I, necessarily places him, in analogy with God's being, at a distance from nature." ¹ This relationship or encounter between God and man is absolutely central for the theology of Ronald Gregor Smith. God is both personal and historical. The testimony of Scripture is to the living God who, in the history of Israel in particular, may be encountered in history. There is a clear analogy between man and God. ²

1. cf. above p.27. also Walter Eichrodt. Man in the New Testament, Trans. R. Gregor Smith, S.C.M., 1951. p.30.

2. Apologetics, Glasgow p.55. also, Doctrine of God, p.103. above pp.31-32.

This is very much in line with The New Man , which will be treated more fully in the next chapter. In some sense man shares God's otherness. Here Gregor Smith is able to recognise that Martin Heidegger shares Christian concerns regarding the nature of man.

"Here is common ground, and an authentic point of contact between the secular, non-christian view of life, and the kind of answers which the Christian can draw from the same situation. Out of the questions raised by the situation there come answers in the very terms of the situation and that is the very essence of a true apologetics." ³

Gregor Smith's criticism of Heidegger is of his concentration on man's solitariness, which is not authentic existence in the former's view. Authentic existence is rather the experience of otherness, whether that is Eternal otherness or the otherness of another man. ⁴ Man is only truly man in community, not in individuality or collectivity. It is the desire of this thesis to show there is an intimate connection between true community and prayer, and between true community and the church. Community is for Gregor Smith the most important aspect of the question of man. It involves the mutuality of relationship. In respect of the church he comments; "It's innermost being is one of revolution, openness of being, a togetherness which is its own reason for existence." ⁵

3. Apologetics, Glasgow p.66.

4. M. Buber. Between Man and Man, p.166f. I and Thou p.11, 39. also The New Man, p.65.

5. Apologetics, p.78.

This necessarily involves freedom of response, but as was shown above for the Christian this freedom of response is always involved in the paradox of forgiveness.

We shall proceed by demonstrating the thorough going character of the personal nature of God and man in Gregor Smith's theology before commenting on some of the questions raised.

It is very difficult to separate speech about God from speech about man. God is to be defined in terms of man and man in terms of God. Transcendence characterises Gregor Smith's view of God and man, particularly in his last work, The Doctrine of God, edited from the undelivered Warfield Lectures. ⁶ His consistent concern in this work is with the transcendence of God. ⁷ But this transcendence cannot be described without the relation of God to man. Indeed it is true for Gregor Smith that God cannot be described without this relation. ⁸ It is important to note both his strong reservations about speaking of God at all, and, therefore, his advocacy of a via negativa. ⁹

6. R. Gregor Smith, The Doctrine of God, Collins, 1970. cf. Glasgow Box.7, file 3.

7. *ibid.* p.18, 89.

8. *ibid.* p.73, 75, 138.cf. Karl Heim, God Transcendent, Nisbet, 1935.

9. *ibid.* p.75, 160, 167. also Secular Christianity, p.116f.

Gregor Smith does however say many things about God, notably that he is personal. It must be noted that the use of impersonal language is also appropriate; "God must be regarded as both personal and impersonal and both together." ¹⁰ Yet from the earliest point, and throughout, the affirmation of God as personal is clearly sounded. In an early, but undated essay, God is referred to as the complete person, and the Person. ¹¹ This is much the less usual form of reference, Gregor Smith prefers to refer to God simply as personal. In the very important early essay, already referred to as crucial, where the centrality of personal life is stressed, it is clear that the relationship between man and a personal God is at the centre. ¹² In The New Man, the second of the three works considered to be central to this interpretation, the same consistent approach may be noted. The whole dialogical character of that book will be the basis of Chapter Three. Both here and in the lectures on the Atonement, the third crucial text, the influence of John Oman may be noted. ¹³

10. *ibid.* p.164, 166.

11. What Christianity has to say about Persons, Glasgow, undated p.5,7.

12. above p.14. History is Personal p.2, 9, 15, "Eternal life is the result in the changing person of the gift of God's own eternal person." 16, "The Cross is the only means of salvation because it is God's only means of fulfilling personal life in history." 18.

13. The New Man, p.20 and Atonement, p.29, cf. John Oman, Grace and Personality, London, 1917, 1960.

We have already noted the importance of D.M. Baillie to Gregor Smith's work. Below we shall note his divergence from John Baillie and Martin Buber.¹⁴ The influence of Martin Buber and of the independent work of John Oman finds its more usual expression in the British context in the work of John Baillie and Henry H. Farmer. In many ways it is in the context of their more conservative expositions that Gregor Smith's attempts to introduce a more radical existentialist approach into British theology is to be noted. Both, however, develop the relationship between encounter with God and community. John Baillie chooses to speak of presence to express the personal knowledge of God which he suggests is the universal characteristic of human experience.¹⁵ This is quite different from the particular anthropological approach of Gregor Smith to be explored in the next Chapter. It does nevertheless accept the thoroughly personalistic framework implicit in the Judaeo-Christian tradition, in which the concept of "knowing God" is central. A primary biblical image would be that of man before God's face, or God turning his face to man. This is also true of references to God's name and Spirit. The biblical witness indicates that it is God's purpose that man should know him, which it describes as

14. below p.62.

15. John Baillie, Our Knowledge of God, O.U.P., 1939, p.3f.

to have life.¹⁶ Life is to have genuine existence over against him, but it can never be independent of him. There are two major areas in biblical theology where the question of personal relations plays a major part and it is worth outlining these briefly before describing further Baillie and Farmer's approach to the question of personhood. This will set Gregor Smith's work in a clearer context.

i) The focus of God's activity in both Testaments is in a community. In the Old Testament this is seen in the fortunes of the people of Israel, the people of the Covenant whose history prepares the way for the coming of the Messiah. The "Anointed" is to head the covenant community. In the New Testament the people of Israel is succeeded by the community formed of those who recognise in Jesus of Nazareth the coming of the Messiah, the head of the Messianic community. Jesus gives to this community the "New Covenant" which forms the basis of this new community and which is indissolubly linked to him. It is in the realisation of the covenant community that God is to be known.

ii) The concept of community is recognised also in the doctrine of God itself. The doctrine of the Trinity suggests a doctrine of God in which the concept of relations plays a major role. To say that God is Love is to say that God is in some way within himself a

16. John 17:13.

community, or at least that in some way God experiences community within himself.¹⁷ Alternately we might say that God knows himself. It is thus that he is the ground of our being. Creation is an outworking of the nature of God as love. H. H. Farmer claims that to speak of God as creator is to say that "in this universe personal will is primary."¹⁸

It is not possible to experience true community apart from the presence of God. Nor is it possible to experience the presence of God apart from the realisation of true community. John Baillie expresses this clearly and its relation to the development of personality;

" Christianity is essentially a community affair. This does not mean that it is not at the same time a personal affair; on the contrary, it is just because it is a community affair that it is a personal affair; for it is only in the community that personality can be born and developed." ¹⁹

He goes on to discuss the nature of the community suited to just this birth and development. Only in a community which could be said to be truly universal can

17. F. Ferre, Language, Logic and God, Collins, 1970. pp.141-2. In his criticism of the logic of encounter Ferre notes the extensive use of analogical language but makes the point that love is the one word that is supposedly not used analogically.

18. H.H.Farmer, God and Man, Nisbet, 1948, p.109. cf. R. Gregor Smith, Christian Faith and Secularism, Glasgow, 1965, p.3.

19. J. Baillie, Invitation to Pilgrimage, O.U.P., 1942, p.118.

personality develop. ²⁰ Tuck comments, "Baillie's whole theology is predicated on the reality of man's personal encounter with God." ²¹ No one familiar with Baillie's Diary of Private Prayer could be other than impressed by his devotion to the person of God known through the Christian revelation. This is further worked out in a book arising from lectures given at Glasgow University in the summer of 1941. ²² Baillie's own experience is undoubtedly to the fore in the early remarks concerning the necessity of the lives of Christian families to witness to the nature of Christian faith. ²³ Baillie's discussion of man's search for truth underlines the fact that revelation is always subject to subject. It is therefore fundamentally personal. This is clear in the chapter "The Encounter" where he uses his own experience of the psychological development of the use of "I and

20. Baillie makes reference to Boethius' classic definition of person, although that was given in the context of a discussion of the Trinity, cf. also Barth, Church Dogmatics, I/1 p.356-358.

21. W.P. Tuck, Knowing God: Religious Knowledge in the Theology of John Baillie, University Press of America, 1978, p.93.

22. J. Baillie, Invitation to Pilgrimage, The Alexander Robertson Lectures. O.U.P., 1942.

23. It is surely Scottish humour that allows Edinburgh born Gregor Smith to describe Highlander Baillie as "a little fey", given what we have shown of the early experience of the "other" in Gregor Smith's own experience.

Thou" categories. ²⁴The personal depends upon a separation through conflict. Baillie speaks of the conflict of wills and the conflict of judgements. He also introduces a schema for the interpretation of sin in his description of "naughtiness" ²⁵ This is parallel to Farmer's use of "having gone wrongness". ²⁶ Baillie's "naughtiness" depends upon a constraint which is recognised as coming from "beyond". The nature of this constraint requires a source which is both ultimate and personal. Again the use of constraint can be paralleled with Farmer's use of "claim".

Baillie's divergence from Barth over Revelation seems to be not so much over the source of revelation as over its nature and extent. Baillie makes it clear that all valid knowledge is not only personal but in some sense revealed. ²⁷ Barth's totally Christocentric approach is rejected in favour of a much wider idea of the knowledge of God. For Baillie all men have some knowledge of God. In his discussion of the miracle of grace Baillie

24. J. Baillie, op.cit. pp.37-47. The personal nature of revelation is made much more explicit in The Idea of Revelation in Recent Thought. pp.27-31. It concurs with what we are seeing of Gregor Smith that "otherness" is known from solitariness.

25. ibid. p.p.39f, also "a good thing spoiled", J. Baillie, Our Knowledge of God, p.23.

26. H.H.Farmer, God and Man, p63ff. also The World and God, Nisbet, 1935, pp.185-190.

27. J. Baillie, The Idea of Revelation in Recent Thought, p.19.

makes reference to a "saving knowledge of God." ²⁸ which appears to allow for knowledge other than saving knowledge. He turns to Temple for a more adequate resolution to the Barth/Brunner debate regarding the changed view of revelation, which brings a further emphasis on the personal. He favours an insight of Brunner's however, regarding the changed view of human nature. "Human nature is constituted by the self-disclosure to this poor dust of the Spirit of the Living God." ²⁹ Baillie's understanding of the knowledge of God appears to imply that consciousness of faith makes a subjective difference to our present experience of God but has no objective or eternal significance. If, as Kierkegaard says, "Christianity is of the utmost seriousness: in this life your eternity is decided." ³⁰ then, Baillie's thought may be open to question at this point. Baillie and Farmer stress the idea of freedom as a necessary condition of the personal. Farmer in his discussion of sin can speak of man's turning aside from God's claim as deflecting the personality from its own being so that it increasingly becomes insensitive to that claim. ³¹

28. J. Baillie, Our Knowledge of God, p.25.

29. *ibid.* p.41.

30. S. Kierkegaard, The Last Years Journals 1853-55, ed. and Trans. R. Gregor Smith, Collins, 1965, p.53.

31. H.H. Farmer, The World and God, p.194.

Farmer develops a theology in which all religious experience is to be interpreted as personal. In The World and God he speaks of "the conviction that God is personal and deals with all men personally" as lying at the heart of Christian experience of God.³² In God and Man he speaks of a "radical personalism."³³ The influence of Schleiermacher's emphasis on personal religious experience is present through Farmer's revered teacher John Oman, but also that of Kierkegaard through Martin Buber's theology of encounter. Gregor Smith refers more than once to Buber's attempt to establish an ontology of personal relations,³⁴ Farmer sets this search in a Christian framework.

Farmer, like Baillie, is drawn to a universalist interpretation of redemption but is driven to recognise, by the more thorough going nature of his personalism, the apparent logical difficulties. Towards the conclusion of his section on the Love of God he comments

"The divine purpose of love, in so far as it achieves its end of bringing human persons back to the real meaning of their life, calls into being a new order of personal relationships."³⁵

This he sees as the triumph of the omniscient sovereignty of God. The possibility of anyone resisting

32. *ibid.* p.1.

33. H.H. Farmer, God and Man p.V.

34. R.Gregor Smith, The Doctrine of God, p.24 cf. also Karl Heim's God Transcendent.

35. H.H. Farmer, *op. cit.* p.143.

the divine love appears to constitute an unthinkable defeat. Yet Farmer recognises three hesitations concerning the universalist approach. The first, already indicated above, is the absolute necessity to preserve freedom as a constitutive element of personhood. On these grounds he rejects the doctrine of election. He has, therefore, to leave open the possibility of resistance. Farmer raises the possibility of God irresistibly calling without directly contravening the freedom of man. Secondly he recognises the antinomian tendencies and loss of evangelistic concern of such a conclusion. In response he points to the infinite cost of salvation and the true nature of the new personal order that God has called into being. Thirdly he acknowledges the ambiguity of the New Testament witness. There are three comments reflecting on this ambiguity. The first is that the New Testament may only refer to the possibility of hell which is actually avoided. Then he points to the fact that the witness is ambiguous and that, therefore, there is a line of support for a universalist position. Finally he comments that the New Testament itself in its ambiguity concerning the future lays an appropriate stress of the significance of the here and now.

Early, Farmer refers to "God, the neighbour and the self constituting an ultimate and continuous order of personal relationships" ³⁶ He makes explicit reference

36. H.H.Farmer, The World and God, p.13.

to Martin Buber's category of the "I-Thou". He goes on to speak about the immediacy of our awareness of other beings, an intuitive and intrinsic awareness which is direct.³⁷ Later he speaks of trust as the climax of personal relations and comes close to giving a definition of personality as, "that type of conscious being who is capable of entering into such a mutual relationship of trust."³⁸ Towards the end of his section, *The World as Symbol*, having spoken of nature and society as God's means of communicating with man, he claims the "relationship is immediate yet not unmediated."³⁹ This inevitably calls to mind Baillie's use of the phrase "a mediated immediacy."⁴⁰ Gregor Smith takes issue with the directness of this encounter even as expressed here. The question of freedom in relation to personhood is a significant one. For Gregor Smith freedom to decide for God is a gift given together with forgiveness. He may develop a more radical approach than Baillie or Farmer but his concern is with the same primary question of the personal.

37. see below p.62 where Gregor Smith's criticism of Baillie and Buber on this issue of directness is dealt with. also D.M. Baillie, God was in Christ, p.109.

38. Farmer, op. cit. p.21.

39. ibid. p.76.

40. J. Baillie, Our Knowledge of God, p.178ff, and R. Gregor Smith, The Free Man, p.18. and The Doctrine of God, p.127-8.

Sin may be understood on this basis as a way of being which moves away from the personal and towards the impersonal. ⁴¹ The personal nature of God is expressed particularly clearly in Gregor Smith's discussion of the possibility of the passibility of God. While he concludes that "we must speak of a complete, unchanging, omnipotent, perfect and impassible God" yet he is able to speak of God suffering, loving, moving, willing and doing. ⁴² The personal nature of God may be illustrated throughout the rest of Gregor Smith's work,⁴³ but we may now turn to the question of man.

As already indicated the concepts of God and man are closely inter-related throughout Gregor Smith's theology and we should not be surprised that the above material could be followed through to see what it reveals of man. However, there is also considerable additional material that may be considered.

In an early essay Gregor Smith outlines the development of the term person. ⁴⁴ His central concern is with that

41. Atonement, p.21.

42. ibid. p.117 - 117e. cf. above p.10 "That to suffering in love, there is no alternative." Here Gregor Smith raises this question again. "is it possible to love without suffering."

43. e.g. The New Man, p.17, 22-3, 75. Secular Christianity, p.35-7, 39ff, 121. The Free Man, p.18, "we must never forget that in an irreducible way the Christian does encounter in his faith a God who, whatever else he is, is also, or at least, in some sense personal." also The Nature of faith, p.6.

44. What has Christianity to say about Persons? Glasgow.

which makes "you yourself and not your neighbour". He distinguishes this from being an individual in the sense of biological separation, and from personality, which he considers to be some eccentric or outstanding characteristic. He raises three questions about the relationship between believer, church and society, which depend on a later philosophical distinction between the individual and society which he claims the New Testament does not recognise.

"All these questions assume a cleavage between the individual and the world or community in which he lives. The question we are interested in, the question about Persons, does not assume any such cleavage." ⁴⁵

In the argument of the rest of this essay, Gregor smith develops an important theme. There is a distinction between a human being and a person. A human being must move from being a solitary individual to becoming a person in relation. This happens through contact with God and with other human beings. He makes reference here to Jesus' citing of the greatest commandment and its sequel ⁴⁶ and to the love of Jesus himself. Jesus exemplifies the openness to others which is the basis of being a person. He illustrates the mutuality of personhood. "This then is the first thing to remember about persons: persons do not exist in isolation; they

45. *ibid.* p.3.

46. Mark 12:29-31. cf. Allan Galloway, A God I can talk to. in God Secularisation and History, E.T. Long. p.120.

are made in relation with other persons and especially with God." 47 When it comes to the content of persons this is less easy to define, in fact it is "a content known only by expressing itself." 48 The truth about man is that he is selfish. This "selfish-self" is a "point of departure" on the journey to true self or personhood. This journey can only be made in community. We are in fact fractured persons and Christianity, whilst leaving us in the world, sets us on the road to removing the barriers which protect our individuality in order that we may become persons. Two further quotations may summarise this for us:

"The qualities which make a real person are qualities found in communion and community."

"God is the chief means of this shift and growth in a person because he is the complete person: in him everything is fulfilled and is forever pure and simple: in touch with his person the creaturely person blossoms, or grows, or emerges from its darkness and sin." 49

This is in keeping with the whole tenor of his theology. So in a broadcast on the work of Martin Buber, True

47. *ibid.* p.4.

48. *ibid.* p.5 cf. Matthew 10:39.

49. *ibid.* cf. Henri J. M. Nouwen, Reaching Out, Collins, 1976. A Catholic spirituality which is very close to what Gregor Smith is saying here. It begins with man's "suffocating loneliness" and describes three movements of the spiritual life; from loneliness to solitude, from hostility to hospitality and from illusion to prayer. It begins "This book is a response to the question: What does it mean to live in the spirit of Jesus Christ?" p.15. This is Gregor Smith's question. We shall return to this theme in the conclusion.

Conversation, he could comment that Buber's desire was to "discern and restore true humanity, or true human relations, to our society".⁵⁰ We have already pointed to this distinction above⁵¹ and there it was said to be ambiguous. We cannot deal with this fully until the Chapter below on Salvation but if salvation enters human history as the distinction between a human being and a person, if this is the quality of eternal life of John's gospel, where does that leave human beings who have not yet nor never will become persons? This ambiguity is reflected in Gregor Smith's view of conversion, in his view of the truly secularised community and the church, and in his view of redeemed and unredeemed humanity. Gregor Smith has not attempted to define what it is to be a person other than in totally relational terms. This is in line with Farmer's definition of person at the outset of his The World and God, as "That type of conscious being which is capable of entering into such a mutual relationship of trust."⁵² Gregor Smith sets this relation in the centre of our whole understanding of being in the world before God.

50. True Conversation, Glasgow. Pub. Common Ground, 9. also B.B.C. Third programme 5.2.55.

51. above p.34.

52. H.H.Farmer, The World and God, Nisbet, 1935, p.21.

It is not too surprising to find that both history and faith partake in this personal nature. The core of Gregor Smith's treatment of faith in Secular Christianity, corresponds to this.⁵³

It was noted at the outset of this chapter that while Gregor Smith's own theology might be described as thoroughly personal he was not uncritical of personalist theology, particularly of Baillie and Buber. It was whilst studying under John Baillie at Edinburgh that Gregor Smith translated Martin Buber's I and Thou. He diverges from both these men in his understanding of the nature of the relationship between God and man. The crucial point is the question of directness. Gregor Smith argues that the directness of personal presence upheld by Baillie and Buber "empties faith of its historicity".⁵⁴ Two points may be made for the purposes of this thesis. The most important is that the Christ-event is given prominence as the particularising of the relationship between God and man and is therefore set in the centre of a personalist theology. The second is that

53. Secular Christianity, ch.3,4,5, also Still Point, p.49, 63-64. History is Personal, It now becomes clear why this is such a crucial essay. Christian Faith and Secularity, p.2 "faith carries with it the possibility of personal authentic existence." Our Understanding of the Bible as the Word of God p.10 "it is the very nature of faith to be supremely personal."

54. The Free Man p.17-19, The Doctrine of God p.(24), 127-131. and references there to; I and Thou, Eclipse of God, Our Knowledge of God and The Sense of the Presence of God. Secular Christianity, p.63. Introduction to Theology, Glasgow, p.33.

theology as an analysis of man's experience, primarily that recorded in scripture, reveals the essentially personal nature of existence as "I-with-the-other-in-a-world."⁵⁵ The relation of trust which Baillie makes rely on the "knowing" given in the directness of the presence of God is only possible for Gregor Smith in and through the revelation of trustworthiness given in the Christ-event.

We noted the paradox of Christianity leaving its imprint on the question of man's freedom,⁵⁶ and this is further evidenced in Gregor Smith's treatment of Ethics. In Vocation and Calling he points to the link between freedom and responsibility in the understanding of Christian calling.⁵⁷ Again this paradox is reflected in the nature of history;

"The Christian view of history includes both the freely willed decisions of persons and the control of history through the events of revelation. Freedom and authority are the two sides of the Christian view, and they spring equally from faith in the Incarnation, which involves equally freedom and authority."⁵⁸

55. Doctrine of God p.128-131. R.W. Hepburn's criticism of the notion of paradox has already been noted. He also is very critical of the possibility of a personalist theology particularly as it is expressed by H.H.Farmer, which would include the line that owes much to Buber, developed here. cf. Christianity and Paradox

56. above p.44.

57. Vocation and Calling Lectures in Systematic Theology III, Glasgow, p.27.

58. The Nature of Christian Action Lectures in Systematic Theology III. Glasgow, p17.

Freedom, the freedom to make a choice and supremely the freedom to make a decision in the face of the encounter with God presented by the Christ-event, is the essence of personhood. This freedom is given by the grace of God in the Word. It is in this sense that the Word of God is the source of all life.

Stewart Sutherland raises the question of how we may speak of God as a person? ⁵⁹ He proposes a revisionary theology beginning from the notion of evil and suffering which leads to an extensive agnosticism about God. We may note that his proposal of a via negativa is far from that advocated by Gregor Smith. ⁶⁰ He argues that the notion of God's knowing and acting is difficult if not impossible to reconcile with God's eternity.⁶¹ He presents us with the problem of individuation with regard to God. In many respects the same question is raised in an interesting article by Robert W. Jenson.⁶² He argues for the necessity of God's embodiment if he is to be known by man. If granted this would give to the

59. Stewart R. Sutherland, God, Jesus and Belief Blackwell, 1984, p.51, 68-9.

60. *ibid.* p.31., above p.47.

61. *ibid.* p.66-8.

62. Robert W. Jenson The Body of God's Presence, in Creation, Christ and Culture, Ed. W.A. McKinney, T.& T. Clark, 1976, pp.82-91.

concept of a "knowable God" an objectivity against which Ronald Gregor Smith so vigorously attempts to argue. Jenson asserts that the question of God's identity is at the base of theology as this is the focus of the soteriological question. Against this Gregor Smith would not argue but would insist that the only identity we may speak of for God is his being for us in Incarnation and Atonement. Jenson outlines five propositions intended to illustrate the dependence of personal relations on bodily presence. What this does usefully do is to reinforce the question of individuation. ⁶³ Jenson also highlights the relationship of transcendence to personal relation.⁶⁴

4. "In that the body is the available person and mediates the past person, it is the person's identifiability. Identification depends entirely upon the body." ⁶⁵

Identification lies at the root of encounter. Encounter is a significant motif in the theory of Gregor Smith. It is reasonable to ask therefore what concept of identity may be applied to God if the concept of non-

63 Gregor Smith argues for a unitary world view which totally rejects Cartesian dualism. In the discussion of personal identity, S. Shoemaker and Richard Swinburne, Personal Identity, Blackwell, 1984 both descriptions of personal identity, dualist and materialist, rest upon a fundamental individuation.

64. op. cit. p.83, cf. Karl Heim, God Transcendent, Nisbet, 1935. Jenson also relates the idea of freedom to transcendence.

65. ibid. p.84.

objectifiability is maintained. The possibility of encounter arises when a person gives himself as object to another. This happens through spirit and is realised in language. In an article entitled A Personal God, Ramsey defends talk of a personal God using the concept of "cosmic disclosure", to speak of encounter, or of reality 'coming alive'. "66 He too accepts the necessity of speaking of God in both personal and non-personal terms, "67 but emphasises that the active, mutual nature of encounter demands to be expressed in personal terms.

Allan Galloway, Gregor Smith's colleague at Glasgow, deals with this area in Long's collection of essays in memory of Gregor Smith. "68 He recognises that within Christendom the word person carries a particular meaning which he relates to the biblical, "neighbour". The significant concept here is covenant. "It is distinctive because the covenant between God and man determines the covenant between man and man." "69 One of Gregor Smith's successor's at Glasgow has written a full and illuminating treatment of the concept of person and the

66. Ian T. Ramsey, in Prospect for Theology, Ed. F.G.Healey, Nisbet, 1966, p.67.

67. *ibid.* p.69,71.

68. Allan Galloway, in God, Secularisation and History. pp.107-124.

69. *ibid.* p.120, cf. A.D. Galloway, Creation and Covenant in Creation, Christ and Culture, Ed. R. McKinney, T.& T. Clark, 1976, pp.108-118.

church. In the introduction to his Being as Communion, John Zizioulas indicates the direction his study is to take. Speaking of ecclesial being, he says; "the being of God could be known only through personal relationships and personal love. Being means life, and life means communion."⁷⁰ Gregor Smith comes to a very similar position, which underlines what we have been saying throughout this chapter;

"On the basis of this biblical survey, I should describe the essential situation of faith by saying that faith takes its rise as an existential, personal and historical relation with the living God on the basis of a personal decision of an immensely practical kind. I introduce the word "personal" not in order to turn faith into an individualist matter. On the contrary I use the word "personal" to express the dominant motif in a living community."⁷¹

70. J.D. Zizioulas, Being as Communion, Darton, Longman and Todd, 1985 p.16.

71. Introduction to Theology, Glasgow, p.76. also Apologetics, p.51.

SECTION TWO

Chapter Three: Encounter.

In the foreword to "Historical Transcendence and the Reality of God." D.M. MacKinnon makes reference to Professor Ronald Gregor Smith as a "most original, even profound, writer and teacher".¹ Professor A.D. Galloway in the Introduction to Ronald Gregor Smith's posthumous "Doctrine of God" describes him as possibly "the most important English speaking theologian of this generation".² Elsewhere he describes him as making the "most sensitive exposition of the best insights of the period",³ that is, regarding the discussion of secular christianity in his Secular Christianity. Yet Keith Clements' recent thesis for the degree of Bachelor of Divinity in the University of Oxford, is the first extensive account of the Theology of Ronald Gregor Smith. Clements admits his approach is made from a sympathetic position but claims it is "not intended as an uncritical reproduction of his thought."⁴

Thus far we have sought to describe the character of Gregor Smith's theology and to set it in context. It is the assumption of this thesis that Gregor Smith had a

1. R.S. Anderson, Historical Transcendence and the Reality of God, 1975, p.ix

2. R. Gregor Smith, The Doctrine of God, p.9.

3. Ed. G.R. Evans and A.D. Galloway, The Science of Theology, Marshall Pickering, 1986, p.340.

4. Keith Clements, op. cit. p.ix.

consistent objective which emerged early in his theological enterprise and was consistently pursued in its later stages. It is a great regret that he was unable to bring it to a further fulfilment. In the last chapter we sought to explore something of the personal nature of the encounter made possible by the Christ-event. We have yet to describe the nature and extent of the Christ-event. It is the category of Spirit that describes, in Gregor Smith's theology, that which gives rise to and participates in encounter.

"The eternal spirit speaks of eternal responsibility..... This is grace, which liberates the spirit and repairs the broken tractless ways: not an effluence, but an act; not a treasury of merits, but a person: not a right, but an utter, and utterly surprising, inrush of life: it is the life of the eternal person in act.

And this is forgiveness: not a theory, but an event; not a hope but a meeting; not an isolated experience, but a life: the life of the human person is met by the eternal spirit." ⁵

R.S. Anderson makes extensive use of the work of Gregor Smith in setting the problem which his thesis addresses. At the end of a section dealing with Gregor Smith's theology he concludes,

"the concept of a spirit which acts upon man in his utter worldliness, which is the characteristic, not only of Gregor Smith's theology from beginning to end, but also his life, constitutes the problematic of historical transcendence, even though he was unable to explicate it." ⁶

5. History is Personal, Glasgow, p.7.

6. R.S. Anderson. op. cit. p.67.

Keith Clements prefers to speak of Gregor Smith's theological vision rather than a system of theology.⁷ That there is a vision seems certain. The concept of the encounter between God and man is central to the theology of Ronald Gregor Smith; encounter which occurs in history through the Spirit. The Spirit is the only absolute in the world, which happens to man in the event of the encounter and constitutes the history of both God and man. In his Introduction to Theology lectures in Glasgow, Gregor Smith states "My whole understanding of the theological task might be summarised as the attempt to grasp what the reality of the presence of God's Spirit in history means."⁸ The reference above from History is Personal is interesting because in the published work of Gregor Smith there is little reference to the eternal. The spirit represents a slowly and painstakingly arrived at structure of reality. To quote R.S.Anderson again;

"There is a certain theme belonging to the problematic of historical transcendence which is the unique contribution of Ronald Gregor Smith. That theme is spirit, and its reality is act.....This is more than poetry, or a vague sense of the numinous, it is the fundamental structure of reality which, while taking several forms, will serve him as a hermeneutical horizon for the rest of his life." ⁹

7. K. Clements, op. cit. p.200.

8. Introduction to Theology, Lectures. Glasgow, 1966, p.33 also The Nature of Faith, p.1. "My biography could be summarised as trying to live by faith."

9. R.S. Anderson, op. cit. p.64. cf. Atonement, Glasgow, p.142.

The outline of Ronald Gregor Smith's main thesis is substantially given in The New Man. Secular Christianity he specifically describes as a development of the argument in The New Man.¹⁰ The Free Man includes revised versions of the last three chapters of The New Man with seven additional chapters. The Doctrine of God, Allan Galloway describes as "his most significant book"¹¹ He also describes The Free Man as an excellent introduction to The Doctrine of God. Gregor Smith summarises the argument of The New Man in the course of his Apologetics lectures and Clements also gives a helpful summary.¹²

In the opening chapter of The New Man, Biblical Foundations, Gregor Smith describes his fundamental authority. It is historical human experience.¹³ In this chapter he attempts to describe a view of God, man and history drawn from this raw material. This he describes as the "classic Christian position."¹⁴ Whether it may be adjudged so is the first question to be put to his work.

10. Secular Christianity, p.8.

11. The Doctrine of God, p.9.

12. Atonement, pp.59-61 and Clements, op. cit. pp.65-68.

13. The New Man, p.16 "All the incidents and situations which compose the raw material of the biblical writings arise out of the common experiences of men in society."

14. *ibid.* p.31.

Scripture is viewed as history, "in a quite particularised sense."¹⁶ Scripture, as describing the historical existence of Israel in encounter with God, appears as a given. It is a given because the primary given is the Word of God which is available to us in the historical events of the life and death of Christ, the Christ-event, which is intimately bound up with the history of Israel. Gregor Smith speaks of the unity between Old and New Testaments in the view they share of God and man encountered in history.¹⁷ The history described in the Bible is a history of encounter with God. It is an encounter which is not an extra to history but one side of the existing situation. As we have already seen, "otherness" is a possibility within the one world.¹⁸ Gregor Smith is seeking to describe a view of man, a christian understanding of man in history, which will cut away all the false views of man which are eclipsing God.¹⁹ Ronald Gregor Smith is avowedly a christian theologian and here is a prime instance of what must have been to philosophers a great frustration, what amounts to a bald statement that, as he says elsewhere, "that is how things are".²⁰ We are dealing

16. *ibid.* p.16.

17. *ibid.* p.21-22.

18. *ibid.* p.16-17, also above p.13.

19. *ibid.* p.15.

20. What has Christianity to say about persons?, Glasgow p.6.

with history and a particular history, ultimately with the history of the event of God's Word as it is spoken to man in Christ. We are concerned with history, which is the experience of man. God encountering man is a part of this history. Not some kind of extra supernatural other, but a given, there to be had in with and through the everyday experience of the Israelite community.

Encounter is absolutely fundamental. Gregor Smith speaks of having made for his own interest an anthology of conversion, the fundamental experience of encounter.²¹ He particularises this discussion of encounter, which is totally historical, in the examples of Moses, Jeremiah and Paul. His understanding of history and encounter are totally intertwined. Encounter occurs in a fully historical setting, encounter creates history, it might almost be said that history is encounter. To illustrate the interlinking between history and encounter he describes the conversions of Moses, Jeremiah and Paul as making history; "The conversion of Moses, his entry into the firm world of grace, is perhaps the mightiest event of history before Christ."²² The conversion of Moses

21. Conversion, Glasgow and Conversion, Sermon given in Mansfield College, Oxford 1954. There are four chapters for a proposed book which form the background to The New Man, chapter One. These together with the sermon on conversion are considered below, p.84ff. following the exposition of The New Man.

22. The New Man, p.23.

is also described as a "supremely personal encounter."²³

This can be seen again in the account of Jeremiah.

"It is not so much that the ordinary moment was hallowed by this encounter, as that its fullest normality was found to contain already the elements of a real future for Jeremiah and for Israel."²⁴

What has been illustrated for Moses and Jeremiah is also true for Paul;

"Lastly I want to discuss the conversion of St. Paul, as the critical element in his whole life, and therefore of course, in the whole movement of history since his time."²⁵

Encounter, then, is thoroughly personal. It is between God and particular men. It is thoroughly historical and it may be "critical for the whole movement of history."²⁶ Encounter is described as having a threefold element; "personal meeting, corporate responsibility (and) the unified relation with God."²⁷

The quotation above concerning Jeremiah's conversion illustrates how encounter is fully historical and this is a powerful insight. If this chapter alone were forced to render a weltanschauung there is a delightful relation of God and man in the one reality.

23. *ibid.* p.23, cf. Exodus 3.

24. *ibid.* p.24.

25. *ibid.*

26. *ibid.*

27. *ibid.*

"God is an active partner in each situation as it arises."

"It(the bible) does not indulge in subtraction or reduction from the whole situation."

"I find no warrant in the Old Testament, far less in the New, for that fatal distinction which was later to petrify into a semipermanent cleft across the whole life and thought of the church, for any such division of life into a sacred and profane sphere." ²⁸

"It is a comprehensive relation which is itself a living entity. There is no confusion of being here: God is the Creator and Israel his created people. But in the relation itself something different arises, something which is composed of the two partners and the relation as well."²⁹

There is here an ontology of the new creation, which goes beyond the "ontology of relations" of Martin Buber criticised by Gregor Smith.³⁰ There are repeated references to a "structure of grace" throughout this chapter as a present reality within the "cosmos" which is entered through encounter. This is described as a "new ground, a new web, a community of relations which gave all they did and were a new meaning."³¹ Keith Clements suggests this term may have been supplied by Paul Tillich's "Protestant Era".³² Gregor Smith certainly uses the Protestant Era to assist his analysis in chapter three of The New Man of the separation

28. *ibid.* all p.18.

29. *ibid.* p.19-20.

30. Doctrine of God, p.24, 96ff, and 126ff.

31. The New Man, p.12.

32. K. Clements, *op. cit.* p.99. also above p.26, where its use in the Apologetics material is noted.

between Renaissance and Reformation thought. Unredeemed society apparently comprises a similar network of relations;

"If you do not see man as living first of all in the structure of unredeemed society, you cannot expect to bring him - or rather show him the way, guide him into the structure of the redeemed society, the structure of grace."³³

This is an important idea because as Gregor Smith's thought develops it describes God's gift of the Word, which is grace, and known through the Christ-event, as that which creates the possibility of redeemed co-humanity where the "in-between" is the Spirit. And this Spirit is the fundamental structure of reality. If this is correct then what constitutes the structure of unredeemed society, from which men may be guided into the structure of grace? If God as Spirit constitutes both redeemed and unredeemed society, what is the difference between them? If not, then whence the unredeemed society? Is it that we may not speak at all in these terms? Again the ambiguity noted above emerges between humanity and real humanity, between existence and authentic existence, between man and the New Man.³⁴

Commenting on Still Point Clements claims;

"The personal being of faith is the truth of life, for the whole structure of human society. Without the eternal 'Thou', there is no society. All social forms

33. The New Man, p.14.

34. see above p.34. This is seen again below, pp.88ff. in the discussion of conversion.

and functions have come into being through the Word of God. Their "human" characteristics are in fact their divine signature."³⁵

Does this mean that for Gregor Smith all interhuman activity is necessarily constituted by faith whether acknowledged or not? Or are some interhuman activities actually in some sense sub-human and awaiting a divine encounter? The New Testament is said to fulfil the life and hope of Israel;

"in its firm hold on flesh and blood happenings,... in its fulfilment of history as a dialogue between God and man, in its concern with the whole world, and in its pointing to the structure of grace as the real place of community between God and the people."³⁶

This statement towards the beginning of Gregor Smith's published work is remarkably close to a key conclusion at the end of his work;

"What is it, then, beyond what I have described, as a meeting, a demand, and a response, an experienced presence? It is the reality of the spirit which is here present. It is the spirit which is the historical reality of transcendence. But spirit is not just a word for the experience of another person in his authentic existence. It is the word for the community of man with God."³⁷

There is a genuine attractiveness about this description of reality. Whether it is as unitary as Gregor Smith believes remains to be seen for it appears to give rise to the basic ambiguity which we have described and which as yet remains unresolved.

35. K. Clements, op. cit. p.31.

36. The New Man, p.22.

37. The Doctrine of God, p.138.

An aspect of encounter which needs to be further stressed is its corporate nature. Encounter always has a corporate dimension.³⁸ Clements speaks of "Gregor Smith's lifelong concern for concrete community as the place of meeting between the human spirit and the divine spirit".³⁹

So then encounter, history and a unitary world view emerge from this chapter as of outstanding importance for a Christian view of man. Gregor Smith's concern at this point, in keeping with this unitary world view, is with this life rather than with any question of "eternal life" as a future reference. The fulfilment of human possibilities in the light of Jesus, as the fulfilment of history, is an eschatological possibility as far as this chapter is concerned. It is the structure of grace offered to man in time and space that is "the heart of biblical eschatology."⁴⁰ This offers the possibility of making all things new, which is "implicit in the whole historical understanding of Israel."⁴¹ Gregor Smith warns of the danger of the decidedly "primitive eschatology"⁴² of the

38. The New Man, p.18-19.

39. K. Clements, op. cit. p.39.

40. The New Man, p.20.

41. idem.

42. ibid. p.21.

New Testament. Speaking of the history of Israel he concludes;

"Their history is their relation to God ; and God is their history."

"They launched all the force of their convictions in the direction of that hidden yet most real world, the structure of grace which penetrates the whole of history, and so drew out the meaning which lies in the simplest happening."⁴³

There is a sense in which we still stand at the very beginning of Professor Gregor Smith's published work, and yet a very carefully developed description of reality is emerging which on the whole has much to commend it. A description which comes to be expressed as "I-with-the-other-in-a-world"⁴⁴ The two interrelated areas of Christology and Eschatology appear as the areas most in need of explication. Both are intimately connected with an understanding of encounter. They are dealt with in the following two chapters, respectively. We may then ask whether there is any sense in which we may speak of Encounter and the Christ-event offering salvation? This is taken up below, in Chapter Six. Conversion is significantly related to this question and may now be dealt with more explicitly.

The above analysis has sought to show that what Gregor Smith regards as the "classic Christian position"⁴⁵

43. *ibid.* p.29.

44. *idem.*

45. *ibid.* p.31.

possesses a distinctly biblical "Hebrew" view⁴⁶, which describes above all the encounter between God and man in history and gives rise to a community constituted by this encounter. We have repeatedly indicated up to now that the precise extent of this community remains open to question.

Many of the elements of what has been said so far may be drawn together in a quotation of Gregor Smith himself, from his lectures on The Nature of Christian Action;

"The Christian view of history includes both the freely willed decisions of persons and the control of history through the events of revelation. Freedom and authority are the two sides of the Christian view, and they spring equally from faith in the Incarnation, which involves equally freedom and authority." ⁴⁷

When at the beginning of The New Man Gregor Smith refers to an "anthology of conversion"⁴⁸ he is almost certainly referring to four chapters of a projected book which are extant in the collection of unpublished material in Glasgow University Library. These, together with a sermon entitled "Conversion" given in Mansfield College,

46. K. Jaspers, The European Spirit, p.15. Gregor Smith indicates that he regards D.M. Baillie as standing in the line of "the biblical Hebrew view". This is also the discovery of which he so approves in Jaspers. and A Beginning with Hamann, p.5. he describes Hamann as "rather than Aquinas (is) following the method of the Old Testament thinkers, and of the Hebraic strain in Christian philosophy generally."

47. The Nature of Christian Action, Glasgow, p.17.

48. The New Man, p.12.

Oxford and an article on conversion,⁴⁹ supply the material that effectively sets Gregor Smith apart from "modern existentialism" despite the depth of background in existentialist thought and language. As we shall see throughout this exposition on conversion Gregor Smith insists that conversion derives its character from the reality of the encounter with the living God. We are not in this thesis primarily concerned with Gregor Smith's doctrine of God, other than as it is necessarily involved in an understanding of the Christ-event. We have noted above his resistance to language which objectifies God and to metaphysics in general.⁵⁰ Throughout these writings he insists on the reality not only of encounter but of the living God who is encountered in the most explicit terms.

As we saw above, Gregor Smith's description of encounter was particularised in the conversions of Moses, Jeremiah and Paul. In The New Man he speaks of conversion as an "observed re-orientation of life"⁵¹ which leads to a participation in the new creation, a communal relation to God, "In this relation itself

49. Conversion, four chapters of an unfinished book, Glasgow. Conversion, Sermon preached in Mansfield College, Oxford, Nov.19, 1954, Glasgow, Augustine and Donne: A Study in Conversion, Theology 45, August 1942, pp.147-159.

50. above p.30.

51. The New Man, p.12.

something different arises, something which is composed of the two partners and the relation as well."⁵² Speaking specifically of Moses' conversion he refers to his "entry into the firm world of grace."⁵³ At this stage Gregor Smith's language appears to speak as if conversion creates a division between a converted and unconverted society and of the possibility of leaving one for the other. However he repudiates the "ark concept of the church"⁵⁴ and certainly his ultimate intention appears to be that all society should become the society of God in the world.

In The New Man Gregor Smith does not go on to discuss the conversion of Augustine although in the unpublished chapters he refers to it as second only to that of St. Paul.⁵⁵

52. *ibid.* p.20.

53. *ibid.* p.23.

54. Faith, or the New Humanism, or Humanism and Faith, or The Relation of Humanism to Faith . With constant reference to Soren Kierkegaard. Glasgow, Sept. 1938. This was an exploration for the possibility of a D. Litt. thesis. It shares in the ambiguity being pursued in this thesis. As noted it repudiates the Ark concept of the church insisting that one's basic conception of the church "is the determining factor in what your theology is to be." p.1. It rejects a view of the closed, visible church in favour of an openness to God's relation to man as his creation, (theology springing from the invisible church, "invisible in the sense of not humanly identifiable or limited" p.1.) . Yet he can speak of "the main thesis never be(ing) forgotten, that man who has faith in the atoning death of Christ is born into real manhood and therefore into a community which brings all real men into it," p.2, underlining mine!

55. Conversion, Glasgow, Ch.IV. p.4.

In the unpublished chapters on Conversion, Gregor Smith begins with an analysis of conversion of outstanding figures. He makes a distinction between the "primary and classic" conversions and secondary conversions.⁵⁶ Action flowing from the lives of these people substantiate these conversions. Here he particularly underlines the personal nature of conversion and its dependence on encounter.

"An objective relationship, that is one which is not private to the individual or dependent on his temperament or emotions, is thus established with Another who is recognised as existing absolutely, that is really and objectively existing in his own right." ⁵⁷

The historical quality is indicated in reference to an accountable point of change. The element of decision is inseparable from the idea of conversion. The decision is based upon the revelation of the trustworthiness of God given in the Christ-event. As Gregor Smith moves on in the second chapter to deal with the Old Testament material he claims that Christianity offers an experience which is different in kind from any other religious experience because it is objectively based;

"What distinguishes the Christian experience from all other religious experience is that it is by its nature not something that takes place merely inside the experiencing individual, but something which has a solid structure and an objective validity outside him." ⁵⁸

56. Conversion, Glasgow, p.1.

57. ibid. p.5.

58. ibid. Ch. I & II are numbered consecutively. p.8.

Faith is historical faith. God meets us and turns us to him within history. Indeed conversion is actually the making of human history. As in The New Man, Moses is the supreme example. His conversion is thoroughly personal and yet its historical consequences for the people of Israel are clearly seen. There are three elements in a classic conversion, God, man and the Word or communication. These lead to "the personal meeting, the corporate responsibility and the unified relation with God."⁵⁹ It should be made clear that when Gregor Smith speaks of a "unified relation with God" there is no hint of absorption or loss of identity, indeed this is specifically repudiated. He is speaking rather of a unity and harmony of purpose with regard to God's creation. Again the entirely false distinction between sacred and secular is rejected. Turning to the New Testament we hear again that Paul "is the most important figure in the whole realm of conversion."⁶⁰ In Paul we find that conversion participates in the paradoxical nature of the Incarnation, the one paradox of God become man. This is because it arises out of the encounter with the event of this paradox. It is paradoxical in that it is a gift and is ours only as we remain in it as a gift. It is paradoxical in that we must lose life in order to

59. *ibid.* p.15-6.

60. *ibid.* Ch.III p.1.

gain it, that "action (comes) out of passion."⁶¹ "In the last resort conversion means the coming of the Presence and the presence can be bound by nothing at all."⁶²

Again, as with Moses, Paul's conversion partakes fully in the historical nature of human decision and action. Gregor Smith, who we shall see below is heavily indebted to Bultmann in his New Testament work on the Incarnation, explicitly here declines to go as far as Professor Bultmann in his treatment of the Acts accounts of Paul's conversion with regard to the surrounding "miracle" stories. Paul makes a genuine free decision in response to a concrete historical encounter with the Word of God in Christ and his life is brought into submission to that Word, to effect for all subsequent human history. Gregor Smith sums up Paul's conversion in three points; its normality, its uniqueness and its understanding and the living related to it.⁶³ St. Paul's experience is first of all normative. This stresses the element of decision in response to encounter, "a personal decision to a personal Lord." "God was shown to St. Paul as a thoroughly objective reality outside the world, and at the same time as a thoroughly present, personal and active power in the world."⁶⁴

61. *ibid.* p.1-3, cf. Mk.8:35-36.

62. *ibid.* p.3.

63. *ibid.* p.12-17.

64. *ibid.* Both quotations p.13.

Gregor Smith recognises secondly the elements that were unique to Paul's experience both of the event and the mission it constituted but again underlines that "even in the heart of the uniqueness lies the normative Christian experience." Thirdly this does not lead to individualism but to community. The new possibilities for character available through this encounter lead to action which facilitates the creation of community. "St. Paul presents the balanced christian character, the mystic who faces God and his brother."

Before summarising chapter four which deals with Augustine's conversion, it is worth noting some confirmatory detail in the Mansfield College sermon. He argues here that the account of Paul's conversion in Galatians 1:11-16 should be supplemented first with 1 Corinthians 9:1 and 15:3-8, before the Acts accounts.⁶⁵ Again three major points, this time stressing the continuity of the new brought into being by conversion with Paul's past, the normative nature of Paul's experience, "Christ has made a structural change in the relation of God to man."⁶⁶ and thirdly a reference to "the broad structure of Grace." which I believe refers

65. Conversion, Sermon, Glasgow p.1. also Conversion, Ch. III, p.7-8. It is important to recall Gregor Smith does not reject the Acts accounts, he is concerned to point to a directness which he regards as obscured in Acts. This is interesting in the light of above p.61.

66. *ibid.* p.3.

to the description of reality, whatever its limits, pointed to at the outset of this chapter. He makes the point that Paul's faith is in via "and even at the end of the way he will not be swallowed up in God's life, but brought face to face."⁶⁷ There is a final quote which ought to be added from this sermon, underlining the character of the structure of grace; "a new richness and depth of personal life are made possible within the Christian order such as had never appeared in history before, outside the tradition of Israel."⁶⁸

In the chapter dealing with Augustine, material is drawn mainly from the "Confessions" written more than eleven years after his conversion. Gregor Smith asserts that Augustine was aiming to present knowledge in such a way as to facilitate the conversion of others, as we noted above theology is to facilitate encounter.⁶⁹ Prayer is the form of the relationship between convert and God. In prayer there is give and take, mutuality which establishes the reality of both partners as persons. We have said that conversion in Gregor Smith's theology participates in the ambiguity which centres on

67. *ibid.* p.4. also Still Point, p.74: "I am one of the obstinate orthodox who believe in the divine communication or revelation or irruption from another world, another order, where music in complete and absolute form expresses the utter joy of the vision of divine perfection."

68. Conversion, Sermon, Glasgow, p.4.

69. *above* p.35.

the limits of the redeemed community. Gregor Smith looks at Augustine's conversion again in an article concerning both Augustine and John Donne. His treatment of Augustine runs along very close lines to those of the unpublished material above. In comparison with this however his conclusion concerning Donne is that he never had a similar experience to that of Augustine:

"We have come to the mystery with which we began: the mystery of God's will to reveal himself to men. It is as certain that in this sense Augustine experienced conversion as it is that Donne did not. Towards two human beings similar in character and passions and longing for salvation God inscrutably chose to act in different ways. In consequence, the one has become a gigantic figure in the history of human experience, as well as a person most knowable and real to the readers of his story, while the other has in the eyes of most men dwindled to the proportions of an impressive but rather unsuccessful poet and writer of sermons." ⁷¹

Augustine and Donne are said to share the same approach to life. Gregor Smith admits in this article that there is a direct "mystical" element to Augustine's conversion which brought first of all intellectual certainty and then, through a systematic realignment of his will, a "certitude of being".⁷³ This direct character of revelation is characteristic of what Gregor Smith has described as classic conversions.⁷⁴

70. Augustine and Donne: A Study in Conversion, Theology 45, August 1942, p.147-159.

71. *ibid.* p.159.

73. *ibid.* p.155.

74. *above* p.84.

The re-orientation of will described as part of Augustine's experience comes as a gift which is part of the encounter.

"The humanist bias so characteristic of the Renaissance is so strong in Donne that it maybe confidently affirmed that he never experienced such an illumination corresponding to Augustine's."⁷⁵

Gregor Smith speaks of Donne experiencing a "limited conversion", or in the terms quoted earlier we might speak of a secondary conversion. Donne had both an awareness of mystical experience and a "sure grip on the facts of religious experience." The conclusion may be drawn from this article that whilst their decisive experiences were different they shared the common elements that are characteristic of encounter as we have been describing it. For Augustine and Donne, confronted in different ways with the same reality of God's forgiving grace made known in the death of Christ, their decision was to follow Christ. It must be acknowledged that Gregor Smith does differentiate between the degree of change experienced by Augustine and Donne. He speaks of Donne not being changed "in so complete a way".⁷⁶ It is legitimate to suggest from what has gone before that therefore Donne might be said not to have entered in so full a way into the structure of grace, or the reality

75. Augustine and Donne, p.157.

76. *idem*.

of the new creation, as did Augustine. This is consistent with what has been said so far about the dynamic of the person moving from a position of sin to one of faith. Man moves from isolation to the relational state of being a person in community.

In his outline for a doctoral thesis, Gregor Smith comments;

"Jesus speaks clearly, especially in the apocalyptic passages of division, sheep and goats etc. Have we the right to speak of this distinction, and to order, human society on this basis. No; this refers to God and in particular to the judgement of the atonement. This is God's affair (and each man's affair); it is not a metaphysic of redemption." ⁷⁷

Again we are faced with the question not of truth but of reality, of what we may speak. It is only in God that truth and reality meet. Later in this essay outline, having affirmed that sin is a position and not a negation, he states, "life is faith and sin; opposite yet both positively existing."⁷⁸ In this sense we are all in via and conversion, or response to the encounter with God in the Christ-event is a setting in the right direction.

77. Faith or the New Humanity, Glasgow, p.1.

78. ibid. p.4.

Chapter Four: (A) Christology.

This thesis has so far stressed the importance of encounter with God through the Christ-event as a motif within the theology of Ronald Gregor Smith without attempting an analysis of the "Christ-event" itself. The following two chapters attempt to describe two aspects of this motif which are not strictly separable, in that they are to be held together to express the truth. In the first we look at what is traditionally called Christology which in Gregor Smith is centred in the Atonement. In the following chapter we look at Eschatology which, like the Atonement, is centred in Christ.

Clements, commenting on the article , What Christ shows us of God, speaks of

"a remarkable christocentricity.., the human humiliated Jesus presents us with a very different view of God from the immutable and eternal. Christ is God's Word spoken out of darkness, and thereby we know that God's real life is not static omnipotence or immutability, but simply what Christ is." ¹

This captures immediately the emphasis of Gregor Smith's Christology. First there are the historical facts of the life of Jesus. Jesus was thoroughly human. In his life and death he suffered. In this is the message tied to the messenger which is God's Word to man. As the bearer of the Word, Jesus is the Christ. These two words, Word

1. What Christ shows us of God, British Weekly, April 9, 1942, Clements op. cit. p.35.

and Christ are Gregor Smith's main ways of expressing the significance of the history of Jesus which is not separate from the context of the history of Israel. Gregor Smith's consistent approach is that through the proclamation of the past event of Christ, the living Word of God encounters us in the present. Here we may see Kierkegaard's second question pressing on Gregor Smith as did the question "How to become a christian?" in the last chapter. The question of the relation of the present to the past is one that preoccupied Gregor Smith. The relation of eternity to time also was persistently involved in his thinking. The questions are resolved in Christ.

"It is only in the absolute relation to the absolute that all these relativities find their place and are restored. Man becomes truly historical in relation to God, who himself concentrates the eternal in a relative and contingent reality, namely, in Christ the God-man." ²

This comment of Gregor Smith, made concerning the work of Kierkegaard, can legitimately be used to point the way to his own work. In his six brief articles for the Dictionary of Christian Ethics, Gregor Smith points out Hamann's emphasis on God's condescension in Christ as well as the historicity of Christianity, and again about Bonhoeffer he claims that his christology became more and more historical.³ In The New Man Gregor Smith speaks

2. Ed. J. Macquarrie, Dictionary of Christian Ethics, Art. R.Gregor Smith, Kierkegaard S. A. pp.188-189.

3. *ibid.* Hamann, J.G. pp.144, Bonhoeffer, D. pp.33-4.

first of the death of Jesus "for all the world".⁴ Then, in the context of discussing Paul's conversion he says;

"For St. Paul history has been fulfilled in the coming of the Messiah. In the wider historical context the coming of the Messiah is part of a close web of historical circumstances whose texture cannot be torn apart."⁵

In the second chapter, discussing Luther's understanding of the sphere of faith's activity he speaks of the Incarnation;

"but he was also speaking positively, in terms of his understanding of the whole biblical view of man and second and in particular of the meaning of the Incarnation. And this indeed seems to me to be one inescapable consequence of any doctrine of the Incarnation, of God becoming man, namely that man in history is the important matter."⁶

On the following page he speaks of the Word as the God-man who honoured human life. In chapter three he complains of the church in its response to the Renaissance as giving "insufficient recognition to the newness of the Incarnation as a given fact of the human situation."⁷ Later, describing the double allegiance the church owes to God and the world, which are in fact two sides of the one allegiance, he describes Christ as

"not a heavenly fantasy, or a tour de force on the part of an inaccessible otherness; but he is the givenness of transcendence, he is transcendence in its only

4. The New Man, p.19.

5. *ibid.* p.25.

6. *ibid.* p.43.

7. *ibid.* p.62.

accessible form, namely, a human life in human history, in the one world which all men share as the place of their destiny."⁸

In the final chapter discussing Bonhoeffer's understanding of the encounter with Jesus he gives a lengthy quotation from Letters and Papers from Prison underlining that faith is participation in the being of Jesus as the man for others, the Crucified. ⁹

So, already, we can see that this primary concern is not in any sense a biographical one but is with the history of Jesus as the Christ, the revelation of the living God. Jesus as the "man for others" is the revelation of God for us. It is Jesus' absolute relation to God which enables him to be absolutely for others and it is this which leads to the cross, absolute love in absolute suffering.¹⁰

R.S. Anderson severely criticises Gregor Smith's treatment of Bonhoeffer's christology;

"once Gregor Smith found in Bonhoeffer the concepts of this worldly transcendence, which became the garment with which he clothed the nakedness of spirit-act, he went no further in exploring the significance of Bonhoeffer's earlier writings, which are profoundly Christological."¹¹

Anderson seeks to substantiate this claim and suggests

8. *ibid.* p.67.

9. *ibid.* p.101., D. Bonhoeffer, Letters and Papers from Prison, Collins, 1953, Christology, Collins, 1966.

10. *above* p.10.

11. R.S. Anderson, Historical transcendence and the Reality of God, Geoffrey Chapman, 1975. p.68.

that it was in part at least because of his preference for Bultmann's interpretation. Clements, while acknowledging Gregor Smith's following of Bultmann in his view of Jesus,¹² which we shall see below is important for his eschatology, ably defends this supposed weakness on the part of Gregor Smith,¹³ noting amongst other things his efforts to make the early Bonhoeffer available in English and his supervision of J.A. Phillip's doctoral work on Bonhoeffer.¹⁴ In the closing pages of The New Man Gregor Smith says of Bonhoeffer's thought;

" I am quite sure that in such letters Bonhoeffer was breaking through to a fresh apprehension of the status of man and the world as something existing in their own right as the place God loves to be. You might say that he was reaching a new apprehension of this world, and ourselves, as creation, as creatures; but it was not an abstract or isolated apprehension, but closely connected, indeed flowing out of, his apprehension of Christ as Lord of the World."¹⁵

In Secular Christianity there remains the emphasis on the living Word of God in the event of Christ but now the idea of Christ as the eschatological event is much more explicit. In the preface he describes his programme in terms of "Faith in the context of history, history as

12. K. Clements, op. cit. p.161.

13. ibid. p.182-5.

14. J. A. Phillips, The Form of Christ in the World, Collins, 1967.

15. The New Man, p.103.

qualified by the reality of Christ as 'the' eschatological event, and secularity as the real possibility as offered by the reality of Christ."¹⁶ He begins with a discussion of faith as historical. It is historical first of all because it arises as the result of certain historic events; "These events are concentrated in the revelatory act of God in his Word. This Word which is revealed is Christ."¹⁷ This is the much preferred term of Gregor Smith, but I believe he intends that there is understood identity between Jesus and Christ. This act is "something more than and different from a proposition." What this something more is, is not finally made clear until the Doctrine of God. It is the presence of the spirit. The Word is not there to be possessed, it is not an idea and it is not to be extracted from the event even in the idea that God is Love. God is Love is a "pointer to the revelatory act."¹⁸ This refusal to abstract information from the Incarnation, a term which gives way in Secular Christianity to the event of the Word, and historical reality is further indicated;

"By the 'historical reality' of the life of Jesus I mean something different from the construction of a 'portrait' or 'biography' of that life as it may with more or less (but usually less) unanimity be

16. Secular Christianity, p.8.

17. *ibid.* p.26.

18. *ibid.* p.27.

reconstructed with the aid of literary research. For the present I merely state categorically (what will have to be discussed in more detail later) that the historical Jesus indicates a complex reality which includes some kind of historical 'facts' but is immeasurably more than these (which are indeed abstractions from the complex reality), this immeasurability arising out of the paradoxical and offensive conjunction of the action of God with the human response in faith to that action."¹⁹

The human response of faith being that of Jesus which becomes part of the Word. This idea of the central paradox of christianity is underlined in The Free Man. "For Christian Faith there is only one paradox. It is the forgiving action of God in Christ."²⁰ The first action of this message is complete judgement of human activity. Gregor Smith insists on the complete rethinking of the eschatological reality of Christ, exemplified by the rejection of Alan Richardson's eschatology.²¹ This is to become increasingly the burden of Gregor Smith's thought that Christ is the eschatological event which contains beginning and end in the midst of history. In the Cross the action of God meets the action of man. Jesus brings history to an end in laying down his life, which is his own free movement towards death. This is done in absolute dependence on the Father. This is first of all judgement on the world. But in the same event God gives himself, his reality, in

19. *ibid.* p.48-9.

20. The Free Man, p.19, above p.42-44.

21. Secular Christianity, p.75.

forgiveness. This is the one Christian paradox. The following quote from Secular Christianity amplifies this eschatological emphasis which we shall take up more fully in the next chapter.

"This relationship (of faith to God and to the world) is constituted by the temporal, historical event of Christ. He is the end, he is the Last One, not in the sense of being the goal of development, or the ideal who is to be realised by or in the historical process, but in the sense that he already is the end: in his life history has come to an end..... The end which is reached in Jesus is thus also a beginning - in the same death. Thus the Cross is the symbol both of the suffering and the action of God.

That we may thus speak of the cross as symbolising the suffering and the action of God is certainly paradoxical. It is paradoxical in that we must recognise and confess in the Cross of Jesus the judgement of God on all history. It is paradoxical that in the Cross of Jesus as the Christ we recognise and confess the forgiving action of God extended to all history."²²

This passage is particularly important as it draws together a number of themes. Firstly it highlights again the centrality of paradox to the christian message. It also clearly demonstrates the full extent to which the human actions of Jesus participate in the revelatory Word of God. It is as clear a statement as any to the chief concept of salvation in Gregor Smith's theology and it presses on us again the eschatological dimension of the Christ-event which holds all this together. Chapter four of Secular Christianity is important but is perhaps better treated in the discussion of salvation, except to note the key confirmatory statement intended

22. *ibid.* p.92.

to illustrate the total historicity of Jesus, "we may freely say that the bones of Jesus lie somewhere in Palestine."²³ In Gregor Smith's theology the resurrection is very much secondary to his excellent treatment of the life and death of Jesus. We have already seen that if there is any analogia entis, it is between human and divine language.²⁴ How far Jesus as the Word, the Christ, partakes of this analogy is open to question. What is clear is that Gregor Smith does not see any place for a "bodily resurrection" or an "empty tomb" type of apologetic for the gospel. Jesus gives himself totally in his death, in absolute dependence on God, and in this is God's forgiveness of man revealed.

The main addition of The Free Man is the description of Christ as the "last Adam" or the "second man" taken from Paul.²⁵ This is used to explicate the idea of Christ as the eschatological event. The first point Gregor Smith makes is that a historical reconstruction of the life of Jesus would not capture the "living historical event which is at the heart of the Christian message, and the source of the Christian faith."²⁶ Secondly this is not simply past history for in obedient attention to the past it comes to us in the living present. "The image is

23. *ibid.* p.103.

24. above p.31f. and below p.127.

25. The Free Man, p.59.

26. *ibid.* p.60.

available in the form of a claim upon us in our present being, in our present historical situation."²⁷ In the third point we come very close to Gregor Smith's understanding of salvation, and indeed of resurrection life:

"But it is also an opening up of the future. It is also a reopening of the present, pointing to ever new possibilities. In this sense the image of Christ is never complete in the whole course of human history."²⁸

In The Doctrine of God the emphasis remains clearly on Christ as the eschatological event where the speech of God happens. Christ is the norm of the speech. Now the note of promise is added, or at least made more explicit. In this respect The Doctrine of God is more positive than earlier works. "Christ as the word of promise in person is the norm, the only norm."²⁹ Again Christ is seen as the source of faith.³⁰ "The normative historical power is not and cannot be in any traditional documents, not even the Bible, but solely in the person of Christ."³¹

At the end of the chapter on the historicity of man, as Gregor Smith begins to turn to the historicity of God, he focuses thought on the Word, as "constitutive of

27. idem.

28. idem.

29. The Doctrine of God, p.35.

30. ibid. p.69.

31. ibid. p.72.

man's humanity." Here we come face to face with the constant, underlying theme of encounter with God in the Christ-event. In this brief general survey of Gregor Smith's Christology, before turning in detail to the Atonement, we can see clearly that his primary concern is not with the nature of Christ, of God or of the Spirit, but with human self-understanding in relation to the realities which these names point to. The realities which we encounter in our historical existence, the transcendent in the world.³²

In the final chapter on the Transcendence of God in History, the Word is absolutely central. "The Word is between man and man, but the Word is not just an It. Nor, however is it just a Thou. ... For the Word constitutes - i.e. makes possible - the engagement of man with man. The Word is the givenness, the gift, the grace the apprehended reality of the spirit"³³

When we come to Gregor Smith's lectures on the Atonement, given at Glasgow from 1957, we come to one of the most tentative of his pieces of work. He begins the series of lectures with a confession that he feels his incompetence more at this point than any other. Theology

32. *ibid.* p.141-142.

33. *ibid.* p.164.

is sui generis, it can only be done by participation.³⁴ Faith, which is neither the blind acceptance of authority nor given apart from understanding, precedes theology. There is no direct reference to it but the thought of Anselm's prayer from the Proslogion is clearly present. It is quoted at the beginning of The Doctrine of God. On page two of the lectures he tells us that "theology has a style and a method which is proportionate to the kind of faith which is held by the theologian."³⁵ This is one of the things that makes Gregor Smith so elusive, theology is lived, primarily, and, as for many of the figures he learned from, theology and praxis are thoroughly intertwined. As we have already seen theology is a question of style. If Gregor Smith could ever be tied down to a position one senses that he would feel he had failed and would begin all over again. Theology, we are told, begins and ends in prayer and in preaching. To be distinctively christian, preaching must refer to God and the world. If this is consistent with the vision of say, Secular Christianity then the true secularity for which Gregor Smith argues

34. Atonement, Glasgow, p.1, also above p.31ff, and Reflections on the Task of Theology Today, Glasgow, 12.3.56, p.1 "Theology is never an academic discipline, a kind of balcony-view of divine history. But it is personal involvement in certain facts which at the same time demand a decision." compare the Foreward to J.I. Packer, Knowing God, Hodder & Stoughton, 1973.

35. *ibid.* p.2. also above pp.35-6.

cannot be religionless in a strict sense. Man's freedom and maturity are not a total autonomy but a freedom enhanced by obedience and an obedience which brings true freedom. The relationship between God and man happens in the world, it is thoroughly historical. "In the world, in the other person whom you truly encounter in love, God is present."³⁶ Here we are reminded again that for Gregor Smith encounter is not direct, either with God or man, but it takes place through the world of "It". There may also be an indication here of what Gregor Smith intends when he speaks of the Word as constitutive of humanity. The essence of the personal is communication. "Language is the home of the Spirit"³⁷ There is no doubt that Gregor Smith regards the world as God's creation, and that God continues to be active in it. History is not man's action alone but also includes God's action, not as something separate, not as an intervention from outside, but all along as a normal and integral part of history. Gregor Smith intends that meaning should be found totally within this historical framework. So if we talk about history having a goal, it is a goal that has already been realised, Jesus is the end, and that end operates proleptically. Man's coming to speech is God's creative activity. In Jesus, speech,

36. *ibid.* p.4.

37. Ed. R.W.A. McKinney, Creation, Christ and Culture, T.& T. Clark, 1976. Essay, R.W. Jenson, The Body of God's Presence: A Trinitarian Theory, p.84.

man's and God's comes to fulfilment. There is nothing more to be said!

As Gregor Smith turns more directly to the Atonement he begins with two basic statements. The first is that there is no common teaching about the Atonement in the Church, in fact, not even an authoritative tendency, simply a number of theories. We are therefore tied to the message, the kerygma. The second is that all the theories fall short of the reality.

"It remains a mystery because revelation is not the removal of mystery, but the dark inscrutable moving of God across the lines of history. His mighty acts are not blazoned on the skies, but are done in secret and humble ways."³⁸

Again Gregor Smith's concern to attempt to express the non-objectivity of God arises as he stresses that the Christ who has come incognito cannot be possessed. Yet the Atonement is said to be "a historical act in the fullest sense".³⁹ Barth protects the sovereignty of God by seemingly pushing all of God's activity into the very being of God in his primal decision.⁴⁰ Gregor Smith

38. *ibid.* p.6, cf. Ed. R. Gregor Smith, World Come of Age, Collins, 1967, p.43. Essay E. Bethge, Bonhoeffer's Life and Theology. Also R. Bultmann, Jesus Christ and Mythology, S.C.M., 1960.

39. *ibid.* p.7.

40. K. Barth, Church Dogmatics, II/1 The Doctrine of God p.257ff. The Being of God who Loves in Freedom, T.& T. Clark, 1940

seems to have the same objective but he comes at it in a way which seems in great danger of separating God and his activity until it is no longer discernible as his activity. One thing Gregor Smith makes abundantly clear is that the Atonement is "for us" and he amasses extensive biblical evidence to this effect.⁴¹

"The simplest entry to the whole matter is a twofold insight: in traditional language, the sin of man and the faithfulness of God."⁴²

Sin, Gregor Smith asserts, cannot be demythologised. It is a position in which man finds himself. He describes the Stoic response to universal angst and then quotes from a hymn for the Latin office of Easter Eve:

"O certe necessarium Adae peccatum, quod Christi morte deletum est, O felix culpa, quae tantum et talem meruit habere Redemptorem."⁴³

The christian response to the universal angst is deeper and keener than stoic submission. Making reference to Romans, Gregor Smith comments "All we can say, is that grace abounds in Christ and that sin's immensity and

41. e.g. Mk.10:45, 14:24, Is.53:12c, Ex.24:1-8, Rom.5:8, 4:25, 1Cor.15:3, 2Cor.5:14, Gal.1:4, 1Thess.5:16, 1Pet.2:24, Is.53:5-6, 1Pet.3:18, Heb. 2:9, 6:20, 7:25, 9:14,24.

42. Atonement, p.12.

43. ibid. p.16.

gravity appear in the light of that abundance."⁴⁴ Unlike God's Word of forgiveness in the Atonement, the fall, with which it is said to deal, is not historical but an affirmation about the nature of man. He is concerned with the existential aspect of sin, which is primarily a positive affirmation against God. There is a very interesting marginal note to the text asking if there is not an objectivity in sin? Unfortunately an answer is not offered. Man is confronted by Defeat, Despair and Death. There is a lengthy addition at this point on the question of original sin, which places a firm emphasis on the importance of personal activity in the decision of sin.

"Sin is a deliberate flouting of the positive will and being of God. ... It is not an object in the world but is a way of personal being which moves away from personal being to impersonal."⁴⁵

Gregor Smith makes mention of Tillich's use of the phrase "structure of evil" and Ritschl's "kingdom of evil" but prefers to speak of a web of evil. This corresponds with his use in the first chapter of The New Man with mention of the structure of unredeemed society and redeemed society both of which he describes as webs.⁴⁶ There is very little use of traditional terminology in Gregor Smith's published work. In his

44. *ibid.* p.17.

45. *ibid.* p.12.

46. above p.76., The New Man, p. 25, 29.

treatment of sin in this lecture he appears to give it a very full and serious place.

As he turns to the subject of Forgiveness in the third lecture he begins with the striking statement, "Man is not complete by himself."⁴⁷ This underlines what was said above that it was never Gregor Smith's intention that we should do without God. In this he stands completely apart from the death of God theologians. Forgiveness is the expression of God's faithfulness to man, which makes sin stand out with such stark reality. Forgiveness, he tells us, comes in experience before any theory of the Atonement. It is acceptance for Christ's sake. Having made this bold declaration there follows a series of negations which prepare the way for a more positive statement. Firstly it does not mean that sin is condoned.

"For sin is real, a real turning away, a real rebellion. It leaves real marks and scars, which are there for ever, and its terrible power is not to be wished away, even by God, with a light heart."⁴⁸

Again the force of expression concerning sin is striking compared with the tentative and elusive way he speaks of the divine. Secondly forgiveness is not simply a divine fiat. God's forgiveness is personal and therefore cannot be the exercise of divine omnipotence over or against man's will. Here we catch the note so clearly seen in

47. Atonement, p.22.

48. ibid. p.24.

Farmer⁴⁹ and perhaps to a lesser extent in Baillie⁵⁰ that freedom is an essential aspect of the personal. Gregor Smith may allow for the possibility of human life remaining unfulfilled, in the sense of ^{the} ambiguity that we have so far developed, in that he seems to refer to salvation, over against the more universalistic thought of Farmer and Baillie.⁵¹ God opens our eyes, but not by demonstration or declaration alone. The life of Jesus and the life of Christ are not to be separated. "Forgiveness is costly, it is more than a declaration, it is something done by Christ.... in respect of what we are and do. That is in the respect that we are sinners and have no hope in ourselves, no expectation except defeat, despair and death."⁵²

Man, even man as constituted by the Word of God, is not complete without grace, which reveals that man is a sinner and that Christ has "done something" about that. What Christ has done exactly remains to be exposed in the lectures that follow. After a brief statement Gregor Smith proceeds to examine four main classic theories, Ransom, Sacrifice, Substitution and

49. H.H. Farmer, The World and God, Nisbet, 1935, p.1, 13-27, God and Man, Nisbet, 1948, p.V, 11, 33-41, 96, 130-133.

50. J. Baillie, Our Knowledge of God, O.U.P., 1939, p.201-208, Invitation to Pilgrimage, O.U.P., 1942, p.38ff.

51. H.H. Farmer, The World and God, p.199, God and Man, p.135, 144ff, J. Baillie, Our Knowledge of God, p.50ff, 90ff, Invitation to Pilgrimage, p.93-99.

52. Atonement, p.26.

Justification in the New Testament. This he does by first looking at the gospels, where his thought is substantially controlled, rightly I believe, by the Servant Songs of Isaiah. Then he looks at Paul and in particular at the Resurrection. Third he turns to the question of the impassibility of God, especially in the Epistle to the Hebrews. He then considers the work of Athanasius and Anselm before attempting to come to any conclusions.

Gregor Smith's positive statement deserves to be considered in full, especially as we shall draw much from it regarding the personal nature of salvation.

"It is the costly personal Word, which is more than words, sayings and teachings by themselves, achieved in the will of God, hating sin, loving the sinner, coming to do on the sinner's behalf what the sinner himself cannot do: namely re-establishing relationships with man, reconciling man to himself to God (sic) - never himself being reconciled, for he has never changed in his loving purpose towards man."⁵³

This works itself out in the web of human relationships and here he makes reference to his debt to John Oman.⁵⁴ God is there in others and ourselves and forgiveness operates in our mutual relations. There is an important coda to this positive statement; "We must not leave Christ behind once we have forgiveness. We do not even have forgiveness, but we are forgiven again and

53. *ibid.* p.28.

54. J. Oman, Grace and Personality, C.U.P., 1913, p.60, 203.

again."⁵⁵

In the fourth lecture, Gregor Smith turns to the "Ransom Passage"⁵⁶ which again brings us face to face with the Christian paradox, the paradox of Christ. "But the full, and indeed the only paradox is that God in Christ forgives man."⁵⁷ Here Gregor Smith makes reference to the threefold form of the Word of God as described by Barth⁵⁸ but he goes much further than Barth in the terms of the relationship of that Word to man, suggesting that faith completes the Word.

"If there were no faith on earth, no single witness, the Word would be unheard, unknown, incomplete. Revelation is only possible where there is a faithful response."⁵⁹

Does God not first hear the Word he speaks? Barth is very concerned to protect the sovereign freedom and self-sufficiency of God. Bonhoeffer speaks of the contingency of revelation in terms of the responder. Revelation for Bonhoeffer is continuing, expressed in act rather than being.⁶⁰

There is a second important statement here which gives a confirmatory insight into the nature of the salvation that the Atonement brings. "The new being, man living by

55. Atonement, p.31.

56. Mk. 10:45

57. Atonement, p.34.

58. K. Barth, Church Dogmatics, I/1. p.88-120.

59. Atonement, p.35.

60. D. Bonhoeffer, Act and Being, Collins, 1961, p.8-9.

faith in forgiveness, is the manifestation of this Word in history."⁶¹

What is central to the Atonement is the death of Christ. This particular historical event of the cross is both an active and a passive obedience in which Jesus suffered for sin and from sin. This brings us to the question of what does Christ really do? A leading New Testament theme is redemption, apolutrosis, and ransom, lutron. Gregor Smith rejects the traditional concept of God paying the devil a ransom, the price of which was his son's death, as a docetic heresy "in its full form." Following a suggestion from Wheeler Robinson that the whole Old Testament emphasis is on divine grace, he states, "In this more general sense all Old Testament history is seen as redemptive."⁶² He then re-interprets the concept of salvation so that we are freed from ourselves and the web of evil in which we are caught within the human realm, without the need to posit the devil.⁶³

Next Gregor Smith turns to a treatment of the last Supper,⁶⁴ which is particularly interesting, as it is here that he deals with the Servant Songs and the

61. idem.

62. H. Wheeler Robinson, Revelation and Redemption in the Actuality of History, London, Nisbet, 1942, p.219ff.

63. Mk.10:45/Matt.20:28, 1Tim.2:5-6, Rom.3:24/Lk.21:28, Heb.9:15, 1Pet.1:18, Gal.1:10,2:4,4:5,5:1, 1Cor.7:20.

64. Matt.26:28, Mk.14:24, Lk.22:20, 1Cor.11:24

concept of vicariousness. He first of all notes that Rashdall⁶⁵ claims that there is no explicit reference to the Atonement in the Markan passage at all. He then raises the question of sacrifice.⁶⁶ He quotes from Robertson Smith's Religion of the Semites,

"The original idea of sacrifice is not to propitiate an angry god, though the idea was also contained in sacrifice. But the deeper intention was to restore communion with the god."⁶⁷

This provides Gregor Smith with the clue to the Atonement which is the theme of "suffering service".

"It is this symbol, and the transmutation by Jesus of all other symbols and events in the light of this symbol of the suffering servant, which is I believe constitutive for a real entry into the significance of the atonement."⁶⁸

The intention of sacrifice was fulfilled in the newness of Christ's death. Gregor Smith points to the cruciality of Isaiah, 52:13-53,⁶⁹ and then lists first of all the direct references and then the indirect ones to this passage.⁷⁰ This use he adduces as a very early

65. H. Rashdall, The Idea of the Atonement in Christian Theology, Macmillan, 1935, pp.38, 45, 46.

66. Heb.10:16, Jer.31, Ex24.

67. Robertson Smith, Religion of the Semites, A. & C. Black, 1889, pp.294ff.

68. Atonement, p.48a.

69. J. Jeremias, pais theou, in Ed. G. Friedrich, Theological Dictionary of The New Testament, Vol. 5, Eerdmans, 1967, pp. 636ff.

70. i) Direct; Matt.8:17/Is.53:4, Matt.12:18-21/Is.42:1-4, Lk.22:37/Is.53:12, Jn.12:38/Is.53:1, Acts8:32/Is.53:7f., Rom.15:21/Is.52:15.

ii) Indirect; 1Cor.5:3-5, 11:23-5 > Is.53, cf. Rom.4:25, 8:34, Phil.2:1-11, 1Tim.2:6, also every use of uper emon panton, paredoken auton > Is.53:6

tradition. Isaiah 53 and 42 offer a whole series of titles which are offered as proof of what he is: Son, servant, lamb, chosen, offering or expiation. The gospels affirm that Jesus recognised himself as the suffering servant. "The life and death of Jesus has therefore been understood as the free entry upon a life of vicarious suffering."⁷¹ This leads to the next question, which is as to the nature of this vicariousness? Noting the substitution, penal and moral influence theories, Gregor Smith moves on to a detailed discussion of Paul's use of "on our behalf" and never of "in our stead". It is difficult at this point to do other than quote extensively the closely developed arguments regarding what Christ has done for us. The following quote demonstrates the dominance of the concept of the unity of God as opposed to the concept of threeness; "It is essential ... to keep in mind all the time that in what Jesus does with his life we see what God intends for him and for his world."⁷² We saw above that the new being in Christ which is the manifestation of the Word in history is man living by faith in forgiveness, forgiveness which God shows in Christ. The relation of faith to the new being is stressed again here, "The new being in Christ is not a physical manifestation, nor is it a mystical experience.

71. Atonement, idem.

72. ibid. p.58.

It is an eschatological reality in which by faith we share in what God is for us in Christ."⁷³ This leads Gregor Smith on to speak of the sinlessness of Christ as a shorthand way of referring to the "absoluteness of his being for others." This is only possible for one who is absolutely without self-consideration. Again, Gregor Smith goes on to speak about the absence of God in Christ on the Cross.

"So we may say that the absence of God in Christ on the Cross is not a simple absence, but a presence in absence: God in Christ is identified with every man, every man is lost, so Christ is lost. This is the fearful depth of significance of the utmost reality of suffering, in the death on the cross. This is the basic assertion of God's being as a being for men."⁷⁴

Vicariousness, then, leads us to identification and identification leads in turn to condemnation. "Our hopeless entanglement in ourselves and in the world which condemned him is our condemnation. It is the condemnation of holy love."⁷⁵ If we are to speak of substitution or exchange it can only be in terms of

"an entering in love upon a course of absolute identification with the world, with sinners, and because of this love, and this identification, Christ suffered condemnation, affliction and death."⁷⁶

Two further quotations from the text and a note added in February, 1964 are unavoidable to get at the heart of Gregor Smith's understanding of the atonement...

73. *ibid.* p.59.

74. *ibid.* p.61.

75. *idem.*

76. *ibid.* p.62.

"In a fallen world, a world of non-absolutes, of absolute relations attached to relative and passing ends, absolute service can only mean absolute suffering."⁷⁷

This he describes as the very heart of redeeming love. It opens the way for us to become what we were intended to be because it includes within it the reality of our human situation, that is, it avoids the docetic error that Gregor Smith is consistently on guard against.

"God's omnipotence is expressed in his withholding of omnipotence. This means suffering. Suffering that is, in the one who expresses not God's omnipotence but the withholding of omnipotence, that is the suffering servant. In this relationship both God and Man are involved. God in withholding omnipotence, man in being free. But the God-man who stands at the junction of God's omnipotence and man's freedom, suffers. Can you call it punishment which he suffers? Rather, it is the free offering of the one who is fully man, identified with man in that same love, that Christ suffers. He suffers love, and in love. The determinative element is love."⁷⁸

Here is a positiveness quite unparalleled in all of Gregor Smith's main publications.

Gregor Smith added an interesting note to the typescript in February, 1964:

"Put in another way, this going the whole way with the reality of sin is the very act or life of forgiving love: in the identification of Christ with man we have both the condemnation or judgement upon man's self-sufficiency and the liberating act of love. And all this is the ultimate word of God to man which is his forgiving word, his forgiveness of man through Christ."⁷⁹

77. idem. cf. George Herbert's Love bade me welcome and S.J.Kiekegaard, The Last Years, Collins, 1966, p.181.

78. ibid. p.63.

79. ibid. p.64.

What does Gregor Smith make of death? It emerges more clearly that man is God's creature, universally. Sin, rebellion against the will of God, is a reality which affects the whole of mankind. Presumably therefore, God's will is knowable and known. Fallen man is less than fully man. Jesus of Nazareth is the point at which God and man meet fully. Through the vicarious suffering of Christ, God speaks to us his word of forgiveness. Something, we have still not been able to say what, has been done for us so that as we accept this word of forgiveness it liberates us to become fully human. In faith we enter into the new being, the new creation, we become "secular" in Gregor Smith's sense of that word. Far from being independent, this is to live fully realising God's will in our lives which is to be human. We are to live etsi deus non daretur yet coram deo. But what of death? Despite his life long commitment to Bultmann, he favoured Jaspers to Heidegger for a philosophical framework. But are we here discovering a Heideggerian approach to death? Gregor Smith does on more than one occasion use the Heideggerian terminology of "thrownness" to indicate the givenness of man's life. We have demonstrated his sympathy with Heidegger's efforts, although he finally concludes they are inadequate. Death is part of man's historical existence but is it a limiting part?

We can now speak of forgiveness, although the sense of mystery is by no means removed. Gregor Smith argues that

we can speak of forgiveness before we come to the heart of the Atonement, in a similar way to that in which faith precedes theology. It has already been shown that forgiveness is not something which simply happens, but it arises out of "the costly personal Word of God." Up until the work of Anselm the ransom theory was little more than a crude "cheating of the devil". It is against this that Gregor Smith set the teaching of the Last Supper.

"Here I reached the preliminary conclusion that the whole notion of sacrifice must be understood in the light of the originating and creative work of Jesus himself and not simply in terms of previous notions of sacrifice."⁸⁰

This leads to the exposition of vicarious suffering.

"At all costs we must retain the twofold insight which is at the heart of the life and death of Christ; that he is absolutely for men, and absolutely man, at the same time as he is absolutely identified with God. This is the heart of the Christian insight, and the source of the one great paradox of God forgiving and renewing his creature man."⁸¹

Before he moves on to a consideration of the Pauline material, at the head of this section he has added a summary note which must be included because again it gathers together clearly the spirit of Gregor Smith's work;

"I cannot subscribe to a pure penal view or a pure sacrificial interpretation of Christ's death. Yet the

80. *ibid.* p.66.

81. *ibid.* p.67.

being for others in a unique way is central. And this brings with it the free acceptance of the suffering which is integral to the human situation. Love suffers, not just relatively but absolutely."⁸²

As he turns to Paul he notes Martin Buber's Two types of Faith and makes the point that like Buber most approaches to Paul see him as a dominating and creative thinker. Gregor Smith indicates that the clue to interpreting Paul is that Paul is always a servant/slave of Christ. For Paul Jesus is the Lord.⁸³ First he raises three inter-related questions:

1. How far is Paul dependent on the historical Jesus?
2. What is the actual situation if we compare the theology of Paul with the proclamation or message of Jesus?
3. What is the significance of the fact of the historical Jesus for the theology of Paul?

His answer to the first may be stated very briefly; there is no direct relationship and very little indirect relationship. For the second he notes their agreement concerning the law, that for both it is an expression of God's Holy Will. It is really when we come to the third question and the understanding of eschatology that the difference becomes clear. For Jesus eschatology is still

82. *ibid.* p.71. also above p.10.

83. *ibid.* p.72-81 the manuscript is noted as being largely dependent on Bultmann - G.V.1,188-213.

in the process of realisation. For Paul it is realised in Jesus. The difference between them is the direction in which they look for the "end".⁸⁴ The difference is in their relative positions in time and history. Jesus preaches the law and the promise, Paul preaches the gospel first and its relationship to the law. The gospel is the life and death of Jesus.

"Here we stand before a question of Christology. The decisive act of God is therefore a word, a word spoken by Jesus, in the being and person of Jesus, and a word addressed to the seeking man. The message of Jesus is therefore transformed into the existential situation in which he himself, Jesus, is the message of God."⁸⁵

When we consider Jesus in the theology of Paul there are four things of note;

1. Jesus is more than a teacher - he is Lord.
2. Jesus is not simply a pattern - he is to be followed.⁸⁶
3. Jesus is not simply a human hero - there is no human achievement in the crucifixion.
4. Paul boasts in the Cross - Gal.6: there is judgement on every human effort and achievement.

This brings Gregor Smith to examine Paul's proclamation of Jesus as Christ. The Resurrection is to be found in the proclamation. So we encounter Christ in the proclamation and not apart from it. Preaching does not

84. Gal.4:4, 2Cor.5:17, 6:2, Rom.8:9

85. *ibid.* p.79.

86. Rom.15:2, 2Cor.8:9, Phil.2:5.

add to the work of Christ in Atonement but it continually makes it present. "Christ's death is a truly new action."⁸⁷ which opens the world to God. Again Gregor Smith presents the Word in terms very reminiscent of the Barthian threefold form of the Word.

"In a very special sense Christ, who is the Word, the Word as historical event is also contained in the word as recorded and the word as preached. Without the record and without the preaching there is no Christ, no event. The finished work is not developed in any way : but it is presented, made present, again and again made present in the preaching of the word."⁸⁸

Again we are presented with a contingent view of the Word. How far is the "being" of God involved in this Word? It can be noted here that this preaching brings us into the presence of the "concrete historical fellowship of believers."⁸⁹ This is where Christ is displayed. Gregor Smith is careful to make the point that in the Atonement it is not a question of God's judgement and wrath being reconciled with his grace and love. "But in two ways these are part of his unified being. First in God's whole being eternally; and second in Christ's personal life."⁹⁰ God's wrath is identical with his love in relation to sin - it is personal.

87. *ibid.* p.82.

88. *ibid.* p.85.

89. *idem.*

90. *ibid.* p.86. also Retribution and Mercy are One in God, Glasgow. D.M.Baillie God was in Christ p.189, E. Brunner, Dogmatics I, Lutterworth, p170, 230f. The Mediator, Lutterworth, 519ff. K. Barth, Church Dogmatics, IV/1 p.253.

Gregor Smith points at this point to the central significance of Romans 3:21-26. stating that God's righteousness is his love in action and that it is a dynamic which in putting forth Christ catches men up into the

"...situation of God and Christ. Paul combines here in an extraordinary unity the life and character of God as righteous, the life and offering of Christ as expiation and the new life of the redeemed. It is a personal unity, a personal relation of a most intense kind."⁹¹

This new relation puts man in a new position of freedom from the compulsion of sin. There is added here a four page note on the wrath of God. It raises what was always a pressing problem for Gregor Smith of the impassibility of God. Again he rejects a simple penal theory on the grounds that it separates Christ from God and from man while he chooses to assert a fully Nicean and Chalcedonian christology! "It is this double assertion which lies at the foundation of the whole life and faith of the church."⁹²

91. *ibid.* p.88. Rom.3:21-26 is an absolutely central passage for Gregor Smith, occurring regularly particularly in early writings. In May, 1937 at Marburg, he wrote an exegetical essay, The Righteousness of God, (Glasgow) on this passage which was read and sustained by the Professor of New Testament at Edinburgh. also. History is Personal p.4, Faith or The New Humanity, Outline for D. Litt. p.2, Retribution and Mercy are One in Christ, op. cit. p.326-328.

92. *ibid.* p.90b, emphasis mine.

"I don't pretend that I have any adequate way. I am only asking for restraint and an attitude of expectation which may allow us to say: here is a mystery which conjoins - this much we can see - the judgement and the love, the wrath and the mercy, not one fighting the other, not one triumphing over the other, but both together, now the one emphasis appearing, now the other: the key word is reconciliation, perhaps forgiveness. God was in Christ reconciling the world to himself. The forgiveness which is neither mere condonation nor mere retribution, but is a personal identification with our need, our hopelessness, our despair, our death, and a personal assumption of us with him into his righteousness, and so into hope and life: this seems to me really to be something new by which all our old categories show their inability to express the reality."⁹³

The totality of Paul's presentation is here described as the eschatological reality in which the Incarnation, Crucifixion and Resurrection form one Gestalt which offers me life. It is an "eschatological event of cosmic significance in which timelessness enters time."⁹⁴ The resurrection gets a considerable treatment here. It is first of all not to be separated from the crucifixion. It is a sign rather than an event. It is not to be objectified, rationalised, materialised nor subjectified. As elsewhere, Gregor Smith rejects the possibility of "empty tomb" proof. The resurrection pushes again to the question of the nature of faith and history, so that we are confronted with Kierkegaard's question of our relation to past events for eternal significance.

93. *ibid.* p.90d.

94. *ibid.* p.96.

In contrast to his treatment of Paul, the section on Hebrews is very brief and negative. The absence of the resurrection as a motif is noted. It is replaced by the thought of Christ at the right hand of God. The controlling thought of the love of God is said to be absent and the conception of faith is reduced from that intimate personal response to the Word of the Gospel to expressions of trust, hope, obedience and faithfulness. In short "With this epistle we are as far away as we can be from a living doctrine of the atonement."⁹⁵ Having dismissed Hebrews in this summary way there follows a twenty page excursus on the question raised by the idea of sacrifice on the impassibility of God before he turns to the work of Athanasius and Anselm.

Gregor Smith refers to Donald Baillie's God was in Christ as "one of the real books on the atonement in our time."⁹⁶ However he takes issue with Baillie's emphasis on the continual offering of sacrifice rather than a once and for all sacrifice as detracting from the historicallity of Christ. The Atonement is a historical Atonement, having universal significance. "The work of Christ though limited historically is not limited in its effects."⁹⁷ Addressing the question as to whether God

95. *ibid.* p.105.

96. *ibid.* p.107, D.M. Baillie, *op. cit.* p.192ff.

97. *ibid.* p.110.

suffers, Gregor Smith chooses to point to the unity of God's being; God is eternally for us and yet he is eternally himself, ultimate and unconditioned. "He is unconditioned. Yet he does and wills, and willing he is conditioned."⁹⁸ Gregor Smith points to the realm of personal relations; God in this context is eternal Subject and can never become an It. As far as it goes he tells us this is true and useful but it is not enough. The consistency of God is not an ontological changelessness but a moral, and personal consistency. God's self-identity remains the same through the change of suffering. Taking Christology seriously is what gives rise to the problem of the impassibility of God. If the Atonement is real, it is historical, that is it is an event in history. But it is also eschatological, that is, it is final. So the interpreter of the mythology in Hebrews must hold to these two criteria, of historicity and eschatological reality. As so often in Gregor Smith's theology we are faced with the question not of what may be, but of what we may speak. What we may speak of is not God in himself detached from history but God as he confronts us in the eschatological Christ-event. God's perfection then is to be understood in moral terms rather than physical or logical. "That is to say he is to be understood in personal terms as self-consistency,

98. *ibid.* p.117b.

self-consistent being in action."⁹⁹

Once more we are brought face to face with the paradox of the Incarnation. "The last word is, therefore, that God acts, in his son he suffers, but God is in the eternal Trinity of his being eternal joy."¹⁰⁰ Gregor Smith closes this section with a brief discussion of the perspective of John's Gospel in comparison with Paul.

"The greatest underlying kinship springs from the common reliance of Paul and John upon the idea that the eschatological event is already taking place in the present."¹⁰¹

Both focusing on the Incarnation, Paul gives precedence to the death while John takes the Incarnation and the death together. For John therefore any element of sacrifice is contained in the whole life of Jesus. As before we saw reference to the Gestalt view of Paul, for John the sweep is even wider so that Gregor Smith can say that the Incarnation, death, resurrection, pentecost and parousia compose a single unity. He suggests that John is directly concerned with salvation, the revelation is identical with Jesus, whereas Paul is more concerned with the way of salvation, faith. For both the encountering of God in the life of this man brings the believer into "life". This life is a relationship with God lived in the spirit.

99. *ibid.* p.117d.2.

100. *ibid.* p.117e.

101. *ibid.* p.119.

Gregor Smith concludes his discussion of the New Testament material with a comment which points very much in the direction of our conclusion, to the effect that prayer is the mark of this eschatological relationship.¹⁰³ He furthers the course with lectures on Athanasius and Anselm, before attempting to draw his conclusions. A course outline indicates that lectures on James Denny and Donald Baillie were also intended but not completed.¹⁰⁴ He makes a comparison between Athanasius and Bonhoeffer suggesting that they faced similar theological crises. Bonhoeffer's work is valuable because of its clear grasp of the crises involved and that it offers "stepping stones" to new apprehensions.¹⁰⁵ He justifies the leap from the New Testament to Athanasius in terms of his search in this course for a locus for theology.

Athanasius, he claims, sees the logos of John's prologue as pointing primarily to a Creator God who is also a saving God. On this view death is first of all a loss of the knowledge of God and with it of man's derivative "being." This is the state of man without Christ. This ties the concept of God's reality to his

103. *ibid.* p.126.

104. There is a fifteen page lecture on Denny, but it is not integrated with the Atonement material.

105. *ibid.* p.128. De Incarnatione Verbi Dei, Prolegomena by Robertson, p.lxix Nicene and Post-Nicene Library. "Athanasius' greatness is not embodied in a system, but in his firm grasp of soteriological principles."

action in Christ. Presented this way Athanasius' thought raises the question of the Jesus of History. Gregor Smith's concern is with the "reality which is present in the life of Jesus."¹⁰⁶ Here he finds it necessary to turn to traditional language, excluded from his published writings, to express this reality which is a person. Without wishing to reinstate Cartesian dualism, he admits that our awareness and experience of the reality involved in the Christ-event is not exhausted in terms such as earth, body, nature, and history but require speech in terms of heaven, spirit, grace and super-history. God and Jesus demand one another in order to give adequate expression to the truth which confronts us. Here we come to a passage which gives full expression to the encounter we have been exploring;

"So this reality which encounters us in its varied forms, this reality which is both Jesus and God, both Jesus from earth and God from heaven, is not just a static display or spectacle. It is in action, lifting the veil, raising our eyes heavenwards, restoring our sight to us, giving us the new chance, to make good."¹⁰⁷

The Christ-event is both historical and eschatological.

"For this act of God is an act which is spoken, or done right now: to me, to you, now. This is what I have been describing as the eschatological nature of God's transcendent action."¹⁰⁸

106. *ibid.* p.141.

107. *ibid.* p.143.

108. *ibid.* p.147.

Gregor Smith points to the significance of Anselm as departing from the traditional ransom view and giving to the Atonement its objectivity. He claims that the course on the Atonement has led to a point where "however the reality of the atonement is expressed, it is always recognised as something that happens, as a datum, something objective, something historical, something of eternal significance."¹⁰⁹

This objectivity, "the something that has been done for us", is not affected by subjective responses although it may be that "feelings may indeed accompany our encounter with the real living God, but they are not constitutive of the reality."¹¹⁰

Before noting consummatory statements of Gregor Smith's teaching on the Atonement we may gather one or two important points from a number of coda added to the course. He underlines that what is done in the Atonement is that something is given to us by God. "The heart of the atonement lies in a personal encounter with God and a re-union with him through the being and action of Jesus."¹¹¹ He sums this up here in two concepts; the identity of Jesus with God and ourselves, and the participation of God and ourselves in the relation established between us in Christ.

109. *ibid.* p.152.

110. *ibid.* p.153.

111. *ibid.* Coda, p.2.

Gregor Smith closes his original lecture course with the following statement that the soteriological solution ;

"lies in the rethinking of the whole work of Christ. It lies in a disregarding of the whole way of the work of Christ. It lies in a discarding of the common division between subjective and objective. Christ is not the object and we the subject. But Christ is the Subject who is at the same time the object. He does, he acts, at the same time as he is done to, acted upon. But he is never an object or the occasion of the object which we can detach from him and call the work of Christ. All such phrases, like the work of Christ, the reconciliation, the love of Christ even, are abstractions from the reality of the situation. This reality is a living personal historical reality. It is Christ working, Christ reconciling, Christ loving, Christ suffering which is the reality we are talking about. ...Christ is the ever present, he is pouring out forgiveness ever afresh, in each situation." ¹¹²

"So my last thesis is that atonement reaches its final goal in work and worship. We can say in prayer alone, for prayer rightly understood is worship and work in one."¹¹³

112. *ibid.* p.154.

113. *ibid.* Coda. p.6.

Chapter Four: (B) Eschatology.

At the end of the lectures on Atonement we noted Gregor Smith's dissatisfaction with the object/subject schema for the expression of Christian truth. This was a concern throughout his theological work. In a letter to Peter Baelz¹ he speaks of his desire to find a metaphysics of faith. This might be paralleled with Jasper's search for a philosophical faith. Certainly the three areas of being he describes offer a helpful insight into Gregor Smith's thought. "Thus man's being is ... surrounded by the being of the world and by transcendence, and he can stand in relation to both of these."² It is important to remember, however, that for Gregor Smith these are not separable, man finds transcendence in the world. Iain Nicol notes R.G. Collingwood's criticism of the subject/object schema in his essay contributed to the Festschrift for Gregor Smith. Iain Nicol's doctoral thesis was supervised by Gregor Smith.³ If we return to the argument of The New Man we can follow Gregor Smith's approach to the relation of faith and history to metaphysics.

1. K. Clements, op. cit. p.294, f.n.133, Letter to P. Baelz, July 19, 1968. I was unable to find this letter in the Glasgow collection.

2. J. Macquarrie, Twentieth Century Religious Thought, S.C.M., 1963, p.356.

3. I. Nicol, History and Transcendence, in Ed. E.T.Long, God, Secularisation and History, p.81. Also Glasgow Ph.D. History and Jesus Ho Eschatos.

In the second chapter Gregor Smith attempts to show how the classic Christian position received ambiguous reconstruction in the work of Augustine. Augustine was faced with a situation possibly comparable to that of Athanasius and Bonhoeffer noted above. Both the civic and intellectual arenas were in a state of collapse. "Augustine's was the first comprehensive effort to contrive a distinctively christian Weltanschauung, and it was to be the guiding principle of European thought for a thousand years."⁴

Augustine's thought admitted a dualism between heaven and earth, between temporal and eternal which Gregor Smith claims Aquinas elaborated into a metaphysical structure which petrified the whole of human history. This brought a rigidity to christian thought which denied the true historicity of life. The existential dimension of human life then "loses its historical significance because history anticipates it by taking place within the framework of those metaphysical essences."⁵ We saw above ⁴ that Gregor Smith is prepared to admit the need of bipolar language, although here he severely criticises Aquinas for the loss of reality which came to christian thought because of his focus on the patria rather than the via. Gregor Smith's concern

4. The New Man, p.33.

5. ibid. p.34.

6. above p.128.

is with what we may speak about. He is concerned rather with where we focus our attention [✓] than what is. As we saw very early⁷ he is concerned to keep us attentive to reality so that, in this condition of waiting, truth may break upon us. He recognises we are in via, but is afraid that we will so focus our attention on some supposed destination that we will lose sight of the way and therefore of the destination as well.

This rigidity, introduced by Aquinas, led to the subjection of all Christian revelation to philosophy. Having established this particular interpretation of the history of christian thought as leading into a cul-de-sac, he goes on to describe what he chooses to call the Great Revolution as an attempt to overcome this error. We have already noted the differing character of Gregor Smith's published and unpublished work. He is less "on guard" in his lectures, and certainly more willing to admit traditional language in his own exposition as well as in his reportage. If we may dare to speak of a polemic against the metaphysic of being, it is possible that in the campaign an inadequacy has entered the public face of his work which is not thoroughly sustained. Certainly this thesis has tried to indicate that there are points at which Gregor Smith displays an interest in the eternal. Is it not possible that the genuinely historical encounter of God with man and the working out

7. above p.30-32.

of that in an existential way can be viewed as significant because it is constitutive of an eternal possibility for man. Gregor Smith would otherwise be open to the criticism of making a reduction of the full christian message, as traditionally expressed.

Again we have already discussed at some length the question of style in relation to Gregor Smith's theology.⁸ Related to the question of style is the theme of the heroic. Gregor Smith seems to have dealt in particular with figures whose response to the sense of pilgrimage might be described as heroic. This is true of many of the figures he deals with both historically and biblically; Hamann, Kierkegaard, Bonhoeffer, Bultmann perhaps in his sense of isolation, pioneering a lone trail, notably in the comparison with Bleriot,⁹ and explicitly in Helmut James von Moltke.¹⁰ Heroism is a definite motif for Gregor Smith's anthropology although it does not include an interpretation of Jesus in this way. There is no scope for human achievement in the Cross, as we have seen. It is in the response of the single one to the kerygma, especially when that solitariness is emphasised by the rejection or ridicule of society, that there is scope for heroism.

8. above p.35-36.

9. The New Man, p.95.

10. Secular Christianity, p.16. where he also mentions Barth, Niemoller and Paul Schneider. Also The Nature of Christian Action, S.T. III, Glasgow, p.1c.

Only towards the end of the Doctrine of God does a more openly positive attitude to an eternal dimension occur. Professor Galloway comments that all the words for the text of this book were derived from the lectures and notes of Gregor Smith's own composition.¹¹ Much of Gregor Smith's work could be accused of suggesting no more than the realisation of a utopian society, but he specifically refutes that. This utopian view of man's future, "the secularist view in its purity" ¹² is certainly less than the reality Gregor Smith is seeking to describe. This utopian view he describes as the desire to live out of the future in a way that has never before been evident.¹³

Returning to the development in The New Man

"Over against this metaphysical 'tour-de-force' of the Middle Ages there arose that remarkable combination of forces which I term the Great Revolution. It is a revolution which has gone on till our own day. The new world which was ushered in with the break up of medieval civilisation is still our modern world; no other great change has taken place, and in fact a proper assimilation of the change which then took place is still our main task and way into a responsible future."¹⁴

Gregor Smith is referring to the Renaissance in the broadest possible sense, including notably the Reformation and the Aufklarung. He views it as not

11. Personal conversation with Professor A.D. Galloway.

12. The Doctrine of God, p.191.

13. *ibid.* p.121.

14. The New Man, p.38

simply the resurgence of classical Greek tradition but in a fuller sense as the true spirit of Christianity seeking to break out of the confines to which it had succumbed in medieval theology. This he indicates by citing Petrarch's dialogue with the thought of Augustine, Augustine being the original source of the ambiguity which led theology into metaphysical bondage. It offered and still offers therefore an opportunity for faith. "The change was in man's self-understanding. That is to say the change lay within his understanding of history."¹⁵ This new self-understanding has given man a new freedom and a new destiny. This development in human self-awareness is understood as being in line with

Christianity. The central element in this renewal of thought was the rediscovery of the classical Hebrew view of the world as one world, that is an emphasis again on this worldliness, of true secularity. This is expressed by Luther;

"'The sphere of faith's works is worldly society and its order.' As Dilthey says, justly, 'With this sentence there enters into history one of the greatest organising thoughts a man ever had.'¹⁶

Luther himself is seen as sharing Augustine's ambiguity. In as much as Luther gave expression to the other side

15. *ibid.* p.40. above p.81. What was noted there of Jaspers and D.M. Baillie, was also true of W. Eichrodt, whose Man in the Old Testament, S.C.M., 1951, Gregor Smith translated.

16. *ibid.* p.41. Dilthey, Auffassung, p.61.

of Augustine from that taken up by Aquinas he was a liberating force, but in that he "prepared the way for a new metaphysical theology"¹⁷ he allowed the church to continue in bondage and for the church and civilisation to take different paths. This concern with historicity is brought out again in two further quotations, one concerning Luther's thought and the other more widely the working out of the Reformation;

"But he (Luther) was also speaking positively , in terms of his understanding first of the whole biblical view of man and second and in particular of the meaning of the Incarnation. And this indeed seems to me to be the inescapable consequence of the Incarnation, of God becoming man, namely, that man in history is the important matter."

"The cosmos, instead of being regarded as a rigid abstraction superimposed on history, was seen again as the creation which God wished to redeem; and this creation, in its chief manifestation, is the world where man plays his part."¹⁸

This Reformation insight gave to the Renaissance man the world of human culture. It was to be a world that stood always under the judgement of the Word of God, the God-man, which at the same time was its only ground of hope. But the Renaissance missed the opportunity offered by this biblical insight. In throwing off the medieval metaphysic, it turned to a closed system of the autonomy of man in which the "Creator-Redeemer which we find in the Old Testament, and also though less clearly, in the

17. *idem.*

18. *ibid.* p.43. both.

New Testament, was no longer taken as a matter of course."¹⁹ Gregor Smith sees this as the becoming fully human rather than abandoning God. The closing pages of this chapter are again full of references to history and to eschatology. To some extent this, together with the previous chapter of The New Man, expounded in the chapter above, Encounter, constitute one of Gregor Smith's main theses which is defended again in Secular Christianity and The Free Man. The Renaissance brought in an eschatological perspective because everything was now related "to the hope of the fulfilment of human destiny in the strength of the Word who had come and would come again."²⁰ Many of the various expressions of the Renaissance he criticises as being unsatisfactory because they failed to grasp the opportunity of freedom offered by this rediscovery of Hebraic biblical insight and returned to bondage in some form of "mythological or a metaphysical absolutism"²¹. The new self-understanding, which became available in the Renaissance in its broadest sense, moved the focus of attention from the supra-historical, heavenly consummation of history to the existential present. Gregor Smith refutes the accusation that he is offering no more than another possibility of

19. *ibid.* p.45-6.

20. *ibid.* p.46.

21. *ibid.* p.47.

social reformation, but here the question arises in a more theological form, is he offering a realised eschatology? If the Christ-event is the end of history, then in what sense does futurity remain for eschatology? Again Gregor Smith refutes the idea that his eschatology is totally realised.²² There is a realisation in the sense that "man has come of age"²³ Man has received his freedom to be responsible for his own history. The encounter with God in the Christ-event makes a claim upon him, demanding a fully historical response.

There are two developments of Gregor Smith's thought which can to some extent be separated. One is the description of a unitary worldview which includes God and man in encounter in a reality which happens. The other is his interpretation of the history of thought resulting in the failure of Reformation and Renaissance alike and solvable by their reconciliation in a true secular christianity which allows "man come of age" to come to the fore, or to be himself. There may be parallels to be drawn between Gregor Smith's thought concerning the autonomy of man as properly founded upon an anthropology which can only be expressed in terms of God and Professor Torrance's thought on the rationality of the world based upon the fact that it is creation.

22. *idem.*

23. *ibid.* p.49.

Professor Gregor Smith would not allow his unitary world view and his interpretation of the history of thought to be taken separately but only as an integral part of his whole programme. I believe that the reality he is describing would be better labelled as the church as it exists as a genuine spiritual reality which is constantly being realised and which awaits its consummation. Not a realisation of humanity, understood universally as encountered and created by God, but humanity in particular as encountered by the Risen Christ and acknowledging that Lordship in a renewed life-style. One major problem against such an attempt is Gregor Smith's specific rejection of Alan Richardson's exposition in History, Sacred and Profane. Gregor Smith describes this as a modern formulation of Augustine's teleological conception of Christianity, and argues that the view of history is so changed that it can no longer offer the thought of a simple resting place at its end. He rejects a "straightforward and direct pietistic conception of individual salvation."²⁴ Yet later he says "for our contention in what follows will be that it is not by any such dramatisation of the historical process, but by a rethinking of the eschatological reality of Christ, that a new style of living may be made possible through Christian faith."²⁵

24. Secular Christianity, p.76.

25. *idem*.

We recognised at the beginning of Chapter Four that Gregor Smith's christology and his eschatology are closely inter-related and much that was said there has a relevance here also. However there are a number of specific things that remain to be said. "Eschatology in the language of traditional theology is concerned with the study of the "last things", with death, judgement, heaven and hell."²⁶ The question of futurity was raised briefly above but Gregor Smith has so radically re-interpreted the concept of eschatology that it is questionable whether he would have been clearer if he had attempted an alternative, possibly a more explicitly existential terminology. Christ is the end. While Gregor Smith denies his eschatology is totally realised the fact that the end is already present in history, indeed is itself the end of history, inevitably diminishes the element of futurity. We have attempted to indicate at least some of the benefits of this emphasis. Gregor Smith, by claiming that the beginning is in the end, retains an element of futurity. We have made reference elsewhere to how this is reflected early in his attraction to Eliot and also reflected in words of Goethe.²⁷ The paradox of the free action of Christ in death which is the outcome of human history and the free

26. *ibid.* p.89.

27. *above* p.36.

giving of the Father of his own reality which is forgiveness, offers man a historical future. Futurity is the possibility open to man as a result of forgiveness, and this ultimately is Gregor Smith's view of salvation. It does lose something of that which is being expressed by the not yet, of the still-to-be-completedness of traditional eschatology. As so often, Gregor Smith speaks dialectically as he opposes to the source of this criticism the following;

"So just because the final and conclusive reality of the life and death of Jesus as completely realising God's loving, forgiving renewal of man, there is still some sense in which everything is not completed."²⁸

It was made clear in the lectures on the Atonement that the act of God in the Christ-event is complete and not to be added to.²⁹ Here Gregor Smith confirms that there remains nothing to be added to the completed event of Christ. At the conclusion to the "Doctrine of God" Gregor Smith makes reference to the historical transcendence of God;

"I still think that there is a third alternative, which is neither that of objectifying metaphysic nor an immanentist process view of history. And this third alternative arises out of a radical assessment of the historicity of man. I have already indicated that this historicity is not fully self-explanatory. In every historical encounter there is a residue or an over plus of mystery."³⁰

Does this not now imply the possibility of some kind of

28. Secular Christianity, p.95.

29. above p.124.

30. The Doctrine of God, p.177.

durability to the reality which man receives? What man receives, which cannot be possessed but participated in is life in the spirit. This is a present eschatological reality. It is impossible now to keep the discussion of salvation and eschatology apart and the question that stands over both is when?

Clements describes Gregor Smith's view of Christ as

"primarily (sic) soteriological rather than christological; in the strict sense, although of course the two are intimately related, and are at bottom inseparable. It is the act of God in Christ which Gregor Smith stresses, an act summarised in forgiveness."³¹

Forgiveness is indeed the leading motif of Gregor Smith's doctrine of salvation. The problem is that the same act that establishes forgiveness also appears to constitute our humanity. So, again, the ambiguity confronts us. Is all humanity, therefore, forgiven in order to be human, or is only humanity which has a sense of being encountered by the forgiving act of God and therefore open to a new possibility of being human in some fuller way than previously, fully human? Perhaps focusing on two questions which occupied Gregor Smith's attention will help. In The New Man he claims "How to become a christian was Bonhoeffer's problem as it was Kierkegaard's."³² This leads him to the conclusion that "Our relationship to God is not a religious relationship

31. K. Clements, op. cit. p.276.

32. The New Man, p.97.

to a supreme being, ... but a new life for others, through participation in the being of God."³³ While this sees the task of being a christian in this-worldly terms it seems to imply that we are to be something following an encounter with God which we were not prior to the encounter. Further on he says,

"He (Bonhoeffer) rightly points out that in the Old Testament there is really nothing about saving one's soul, and in the New Testament the focus of everything is righteousness and the kingdom of God."³⁴

Although he is pointing again to the this-worldly nature of salvation it is again clear that a change is still to come. Towards the end of the Doctrine of God, Gregor Smith claims to be pessimistic about the nature of man.³⁵ The focus of his thought on salvation is forgiveness and this forgiveness effects a change in the human situation. Speaking of the source of authority this time, Gregor Smith says; "The only claimant is God in his Word, and by his Word let me repeat, is meant the liberating word of forgiveness in Christ."³⁶ Although we have entirely omitted this so far, it is becoming clear that the answer to this first question, "How do I become a christian?" is by entering into the relationship of

33. *ibid.* p.101.

34. *ibid.* p.104.

35. The Doctrine of God, p.172.

36. The Free Man, p.17.

faith.

"It should be clear enough that faith is not something you possess, but a relation into which you enter. It should also become clear that though faith is ineluctably historical in its origin and in its unfolding, it is not something that you can inherit, from your father or your teachers or by any claim upon tradition. The tradition is dormant until you have made your own decision and so entered the inheritance"³⁷

If we turn to the second question, also of Kierkegaard's, at the beginning of the Doctrine of God this may further our discussion. How am I related to past events for my eternal salvation? In answer to this question we get a clue to the resolution of the now and will be problem. A further lengthy quotation cannot be avoided as we note a powerful passage in which Gregor Smith demonstrates the reality of the presence of the past and the future.

"Our temporality includes the future as well as the past. ...What we are now is shaped by the way we accept the past. But the whole complex of acceptance and refusal, of choice and decision, of trembling and aversion, is also shaped by the way we face the future. Fear and hope are the warring partners in this forward look.... Fear and hope are inadequately described as merely inward psychic states. Rather, in the context of temporality they point to an ontology which is a historical reality. For the issue of the struggle between fear and hope decides whether we go forward in freedom and responsibility, with hope, or accept scepticism, with fear, as our norm for human existence."³⁸

All human life has the potential for authenticity, for freedom and responsibility, but life only enters into

37. *ibid.* p.19.

38. The Doctrine of God, p.33.

this authenticity as it is encountered by the message of forgiveness in Christ. Some human life will remain unfulfilled throughout its history, perhaps most, but for some there will be the realisation of human potentiality. Iain Nicol makes the point that the relationship of the past to the present is that of "claim upon one's person."³⁹ We shall see below the dynamic of Gregor Smith's eschatology. But Gregor Smith tells us there is more. The possibilities open to man in encounter with the Christ-event, bringing forgiveness, are described in terms of freedom. We felt above the weight of the threefold challenge of defeat, despair and death. In response to forgiveness man experiences freedom from these limiting factors of the human situation. Man receives the possibility of selflessness. The picture of co-humanity pointed to in this "vision" is attractive, offering in the experience of the historical inter-human a realisation of transcendence. But he tells us "Jesus as the man for others" is a reductionist view.⁴⁰ Our encounter with the person of Jesus in the Christ-event leads us to expect more than this. He goes on to suggest that were the enhancement of human life all indeed that were offered, the christian faith would soon disappear. What we are

39. I. Nicol, op. cit. p.85.

40. ibid. p.139.

led to expect is resurrection. "But no resurrection comes from the kind of asking which sees Jesus simply as one of us."⁴¹ The conclusion here, and a return to the resurrection chapter in Secular Christianity shows that "authentic human existence" does not lie within the historical capacities of man alone, but only in man taken up into the reality of the spirit.⁴² "The resurrection cannot be isolated from the whole event of Christ."⁴³

"This is the message concerning Christ, that we in our present lives may be confronted by his reality in such a way that we may enter into a new life. This may indeed be called the 'resurrection life', in virtue of the eschaton which is reached through the judgement and the forgiveness offered in his eschatological reality. But this resurrection life is constituted by the relation of faith which is made possible for us by his whole historical reality present to us now in his focused power."⁴⁴

We can get a clearer grasp of the total dynamism of Gregor Smith's scheme if we simply take note of what 'happens' throughout The Doctrine of God. Firstly God's speech happens; "to sum up what I have so far said, God's speech with man is a happening, and the tradition has to struggle with the down-to-earthness of this happening."⁴⁵ Jesus Christ happens. This is not

41. *ibid.* p.140.

42. *ibid.* p.141.

43. Secular Christianity, p.98.

44. *ibid.* p.99.

45. The Doctrine of God, p.35-6. It should also be noted that the Atonement "happens". Atonement, p.152.

essentially saying anything different. "This reality is an event, a happening: it is indeed the reality of Jesus Christ as the only norm."⁴⁶ Defending his use of the term historical he points to two ideas he is attempting to exclude when using the term to speak of human experience. The first is something outside of history and the other the idea of something within history that can control history. "Both ideas are based on a wrong understanding of history. Against them both we may say that real history is what happens to us, moreover what happens to us in the daily accessible realm of the interhuman."⁴⁷ Real history then, happens to us. "The otherness of the other person, who rises in my present situation, steps forward and confronts me, as an event of our common humanity:"⁴⁸ These are brought together when we discover that not only does real history happen to us but our very historicity itself is an event, which presumably means we happen.

"We may follow this suggestion up by understanding man's historicity as something that happens, as an event, in the first instance between man and man, something which is describable as an active word or as originating spirit. This is the actual reality of existence, and it has the form of an event of the word or of speech."⁴⁹

Ultimately as has been said above we come to the Word.

46. *ibid.* p.46.

47. *ibid.* p.118-9.

48. *ibid.* p.128.

49. *ibid.* p.138.

The Word is constitutive of all else. It too is an event. "The Word is an event. It is entirely historical."⁵⁰ Is the Word to be distinguished from God?

"The denial of faith that God is either a state of being or a continuing self-creation carries with it the positive affirmation that he must be regarded as the continual self-realisation of what he is. This self-realisation of what he is cannot however be identified with a being-of-God, whether as Being (Sein) or being there (Dasein) or being to hand (Vorhandensein). God is for faith not a static entity or the ground of being. He is not simply the historical Dasein of Jesus. And he is all the less simply at our disposal as an object in the world."⁵¹

50. *ibid.* p.165.

51. *ibid.* p.179-80.

SECTION THREE

Chapter Five: Salvation.

In the discussion on eschatology we necessarily began to run into the question of soteriology. Throughout the thesis we have raised the ambiguity in Gregor Smith's work as to the identity or extent of "encountered humanity". It is the purpose of this chapter to further examine this ambiguity. We suggested at the beginning of the thesis the central importance of three pieces of work: the lectures on Atonement, discussed in the chapter on the Christ-event; and The New Man, discussed particularly in the chapter on Encounter. Now we concentrate especially on History is Personal. The character or style of this essay, and its introduction, was discussed in the section on style in the chapter, Theological Approach. As Gregor Smith turns to the discussion proper he introduces the theme, "The Nature of History".¹ Society is disintegrating! The War, Gregor Smith notes, is a symptom of this disintegration rather than a cause. The basis of this is the failure of both church and secular society to grasp the opportunity offered in the rediscovery of Hebraic biblical truth concerning the inter-relations of God, man and the world offered in the Renaissance, which specifically includes the Reformation and the Enlightenment. This is illustrated in the contemporary disregard for poetry and

1. History is Personal, Glasgow, p.2. written in 1942, there are three copies amongst the Glasgow material.

theology alike.² What society lacks is a sense of history. There is an indifference to public history which springs from the loss of interest in personal history. By personal history, Gregor Smith means;

"that hidden and for the most part anonymous history which is constituted whenever a man faces God with a true sense of responsibility. This sense of history, seen at its sharpest and clearest in the life of persons, is both generative and the controlling power for all true history."³

The personal is constituted by encounter. It is the personal that is of "absolute and intrinsic value."⁴ All life has the potential to be personal, but society is obsessed with "things", to such an extent that even relationships are becoming mechanical and depersonalised. "The centre and reason of all human life, the cultivating and the deepening of the personal life has almost disappeared."⁵ Here we are faced in the clearest terms with one of the lasting values of Gregor Smith's work. The concept of personal history is constitutive of all reality (Spirit) and this is well illustrated in a quotation from Martin Buber;

"The meaning of history is not an idea which I can formulate independent of my personal life. It is only with my personal life that I am able to catch the

2. Still Point, p.19.

3. History is Personal, p.2.

4. *idem*.

5. *idem*.

meaning of history, for it is a dialogical meaning."⁶

The correspondence between personal history and reality may be confirmed from Still Point; "The people have practically lost any awareness of the life of the mind and the spirit as having any absolute validity."⁷ We must be clear that in his programme for "secular christianity" Gregor Smith recognised that secular society had failed as utterly as the traditional forms of Christianity. This early material contains the core of Gregor Smith's whole development of thought. What matters is the personal. The personal constitutes a realm in which man participates. It is the realm of the interhuman, the abiding place of the spirit, the place where God encounters man in history

"But though we control the whole world, and have it organised to the last degree of efficiency and prosperity, if we have nothing in the inner citadel of the personal life, then we have nothing at all."⁸

Personal life is not something added to existence, it comes first. As we have repeatedly shown it is history. "True personal life is the constitutive power of all history."⁹

6. Martin Buber, Israel and the World, New York, 1948. quoted in R.Gregor Smith, Martin Buber's view of the Interhuman, Jewish Journal of Sociology. 8 June 1966, pp.64-80.

7. Still Point, p.20.

8. History is Personal, p.3.

9. *ibid.* p.4.

This leads Gregor Smith into a discussion of sin. God has spoken plainly to man in the Bible and through the Holy Spirit. To fail to respond to this speech of God is a lack of faith, sin is therefore a particular and personal matter. This is fully in accord with what we have already discovered in relation to sin.¹⁰ If we take seriously the analysis of Gregor Smith's angst, and the poetic echoes of the character of faith to be found in "waiting"¹¹, then to lack faith, sin, is to fail to give proper attention to reality, that is that which happens to us in the present. In other words, sin is to fail to live responsibly in the light of God's claim. "...it is the deliberate thwarting of the personal relation with God, it is the failure to recognise the reality about human life."¹² History is Personal is so closely packed at this point with relevant material that it could usefully be reproduced in totality. However, one extensive quotation will have to suffice;

"For a life lived only in public, with the manifold world of organisation, with routine, with numbers and figures and "hands", instead of living personal realities, is a life lived without willed purpose or reasonable hope: the spirit is dead: sin reigns triumphant. ...Sin, then, is the break of the personal relation with God. As persons we can exist only in relation to other persons. In meeting with them in the free give-and-take of human speech and action we grow in spirit and completeness of humanity. But if we

10. above p.106-108.

11. *ibid.* p.32-33.

12. History is Personal, p.4.

cut ourselves off from the only complete, completely responsible and simple person, the person of persons, the living God, then we cut ourselves out of our natural soil and growing place. Then we grow without truth, and it is not possible to enter into relations with our fellow men: then we live in sin."¹³

Gregor Smith argues that we must recognise the full extent of the defeat, despair and death which is part of the human situation to have any hope of escape. The situation is beyond human repair. He speaks pointedly against all attempts at a solution in terms of "collective man" which obviously included a reference to the "Volksreligion" of contemporary Germany, but goes well beyond that to any area in which man seeks his identity in conformity. Both here and in Still Point he quotes from Reinhold Niebuhr; "Collective salvation, in the race or the nation or the State or the Church or some other organised society, is the most monstrous of human illusions about the nature of life."¹⁴ We have already noted the importance of the "single one" for Gregor Smith. The strong emphasis on the personal does not, however seek to deny the element of community involved. Individualism and collectivism are equally in error. The distinction between society and community, between individuals and persons is to be remembered. "The continual need is to see that the life of the

13. idem.

14. ibid. p.6. also Still Point, p.44, quoted from Reinhold Niebuhr, Beyond Tragedy, p.158.

spirit is original, that it really is the source of being; and that if it is tainted or stopped up there is no life, not even in the ordinary forms of social enterprise."¹⁵ The key to reality is encounter.

"But if the spirit, after trying all ways, remains quick with undiminished responsibility towards life, it is ready for the discovery, which is in truth the unveiling of the mystery. The eternal spirit comes to meet the human spirit, in a moment of time filled with meaning, and lifts it to a new level of being."¹⁶

At this point it must be allowed that Gregor Smith introduces a distinction into humanity which might be said in some sense to have ontological significance as a result of encounter with God in the Christ-event. This may of course include suffering, there is nothing triumphalistic about it, but the focus is clearly on the new being originated by encounter. As at the very end of Gregor Smith's published work, it is the eternal spirit, God, who is "the heart of all being".¹⁷

As the human spirit waits, faith, focusing attention on what happens to it in the present, history, the heart of all being, eternal spirit, God, encounters the human spirit in the now; "Thus in mutual speech and response human life enters its proper sphere."¹⁸

15. Still Point, p.64.

16. History is Personal, p.6.

17. *idem.* also The Doctrine of God, p.138, 140-142.

18. *ibid.* p.7.

This is God's gracious action which reconciles. It is the act of a person who in the meeting, which brings forgiveness, gives life to the one met.

"This is the root of salvation"¹⁹

This assertion which could have been written as early as 1938, continued to dominate throughout Gregor Smith's work.

Having given such a dynamic description of encounter, it may be argued ^{whether} (if) there can be any continuity in the christian experience of forgiveness, or if it is merely a succession of separated acts? Gregor Smith answers this by reference to tradition. But even before tradition can be discussed, the point needs to be made that tradition void of the penetration of the life-giving spirit is valueless. History, which is so crucial a term for Gregor Smith, has, "no real ground in any organic or natural process."²⁰ He draws a distinction here between a valid deposit of real history and living history, which is the capacity to make new history. History in the sense of tradition or past history is "the static memorial to life, not itself life."²¹ It depends upon a habit of encounter, that is of dialogue between the eternal spirit and the human spirit; what in

19. idem.

20. idem.

21. idem.

the next chapter we shall come to describe as prayer.

This brings us to a quite remarkable statement, which could not be anticipated from the "popular" notions of the work of Gregor Smith.

"History is supernatural in origin, and continuation and destination, or it is adrift for chaos."²²

God is transcendent, yet he comes to meet with the spirit of man and in this meeting gives forgiveness, which opens up man's possibilities. It is supernatural in the sense that we are dealing with the truly fully transcendent God, but he comes to us fully in this world. Man has only the present, personal history; that which happens to us now. Man can only have faith, that is he can only wait for God in his graciousness to come. "And this is the fullness of the habit of the spirit; this is the nearest to constancy and unbroken relation that is given to man."²³ Here, Gregor Smith returns to Eliot's *East Coker* and adds the two further lines of quotation;

"Wait without thought, for you are not ready for thought:
So the darkness shall be the light, and the stillness
the dancing."²⁴

22. *ibid.* p.8, also Still Point, p.74, The Doctrine of God, p.182-3.

23. *idem.*

24. T.S. Eliot, The Complete Poems and Plays of T.S.Eliot, Faber, 1969, p.180, above p.35.

Here we catch the note to which he refers in his essay on Hamann and Kierkegaard, concerning the way Hamann successfully combines faith and scepticism in the one life.²⁵ Faith is in the waiting, in the expectancy. This is the basis of the relation with God and gives "continued being to real history."²⁶ The fundamental relation between faith and history is clear. To live in faith is to be truly historical. History is thoroughly personal. It resides in the person.²⁷ Again it is necessary to emphasise that person is a much more significant term than mere individuality. To receive continuity of the experience of salvation it is necessary to be "within a christian community which has stood you in the tradition."²⁸ In this sense individualism is confronted by Christianity which seeks to destroy barriers separating one from another and to open up the possibility of genuine conversation or communion. It is only possible to become truly a person within a community of persons. So the distinction we have sought to elaborate between society and

25. Hamann and Kierkegaard, in Zeit und Geschichte, J.C.B.Mohr, 1964 p.675f. also, J.G. Hamann, Collins, 1960, p.109-111.

26. History is Personal, p.8.

27. see above p.48 and pp. 58ff. for Gregor Smith's discussion of person in What Christianity has to say about Persons.

28. What Christianity has to say about Persons, p.3.

community, between life and real life, and between humanity and true humanity is focused in the distinction between individual and person. This distinction is established, we have sought to argue, by salvation. That is by encounter with God through the Christ-event. Encounter between God and man is something that happens. It happens supremely in the encounter between man and man. In this repeated event man is on the move from being impersonal to personal. The journey is also made in reverse by turning one's back on encounter. This twofold contact between God and man, and between man and man is reflected in Jesus' statement of the greatest and second commandments.²⁹ "This then is the first thing to remember about persons: persons do not exist in isolation; they are made in relation with other persons and especially with God."³⁰ God is an essential referent because of what is revealed about persons in the person of Jesus. Again completely in line with the emphasis of Gregor Smith's thought the emphasis is on the now. Any hope of reward in some future realm is a denying of the turning from self which is the essence of personhood revealed in the Christ. Over against the concept of collective humanity already rejected as

29. Mark 12:29-31.

30. What has Christianity to say about Persons, p.4. above p.57.

totally depersonalising, community is where individuals can become persons. Man comes into relation with others as he waits in faith, that is as he gives attention to what actually happens to him in the present, and the eternal spirit encounters man in his relatedness to other men. Hence true community is founded on the Word. That is the act of God in Christ.

"Only here: first, in the waiting the man is bound up in relation. He is in communication, which is in communion, for he knows directness of being with the spirit. This is the heart of true community, founded not on Words but on the Word spoken by the eternal one. This community depends on the eternal life, but it lives as a gift between the eternal and the human life."³¹

Gregor Smith now moves on to a consideration of authority and personhood. To argue from authority is to use force which is a denial of the person and "death to truth".³² This he holds to be true even for argument from a saviour figure embedded in the past. This also would represent argument from authority which is the antithesis of the personal. He speaks of the opposition between "the obscurity and deadness of 'history'" and "living personal historic action."³³

The "living personal historic action" is primarily that of God and this action is the gift of Presence. We have already noted Gregor Smith's criticism of immediacy in

31. History is Personal, p.10.

32. *ibid.* p.11.

33. *idem.*

Baillie and Farmer and to a lesser extent Buber himself.³⁴ It is the nature of this world that the reality of the world of persons is denied. Gregor Smith speaks of the centrality of the community of two, God and the witness, as a microcosm of all human possibility. Thus each person stands alone in his relation to the Presence. Again there is reference to suffering which is now revealed as the way;

"It is enough merely to recall the sources of suffering: first the self, second, the world in its misprision, and third the irreducible mystery, the surd, that evil occasion of all perversity (which is not person, but the demonic reduction of person to ultimate indecision in the face of the eternal spirit). These three are all forms of the self: first, the self in revolt against its personal destiny, second, the self in its perverted impossible longing to bring all the world by direct movement back to the source of life, and third, self trapped in utter perdition of self. In interlocking action these three weave an evergreen crown of thorns."³⁵

In contrast to Barth's use of das Nichtige ³⁶, Gregor Smith's understanding of sin and evil and the whole area of opposition to God is much more "substantial". Essentially sin and evil lead to depersonalisation. So, as here, he speaks of evil as an impersonal non-hearing, in contrast to the eternal spirit who speaks. He is also prepared to speak of the demonic reduction of person and

34. above p.29, 49, 57, 62. This despite his own form of directness noted above, p.161.

35. History is Personal, p.12.

36. K. Barth Church Dogmatics, III/3 p.289ff.

it is clear from another, obviously early, unpublished essay on the Lord's Prayer, that he regards the "evil one" as, in some sense, active will.³⁷ He insists on the translation of the relevant stanza of the Lord's prayer as "But deliver us from the evil one", pointing out that this would have been taken for granted as indicating the supernatural origin of evil to those using the older translation. Two short quotations are relevant;

"I am not sure how much it matters for our true understanding that we should agree with the old traditional belief in a living active figure, a fallen angel, in the devil. What does matter is that we should at least see that we are in constant peril of being delivered by our own sins into the power of evil"³⁸

"For myself I take the figure of the devil as a real and living and powerful one.it gives us without any doubt the truth and reality about this life."³⁹

There is an interesting contrast to be noted. We have argued for the reality of God in the thought of Gregor Smith and together with this there seems to be an emphasis that what is "good" in or for man, his authenticity or potentiality, comes from outside of man. With regard to evil the reverse pertains. The figure generally associated with evil is regarded as a useful

37. The Lord's Prayer, Glasgow, Unpublished, early essay of about 9,000 words.

38. *ibid.* p.27.

39. *ibid.* p.28.

and powerful "figure" but nonetheless as definitely a figure. Together with this is the marked emphasis that evil comes from within man. It is necessary still to say that for Gregor Smith whatever the form of evil it represents something essentially active and real whereas Barth's thought tends towards the unreal, or nothingness. The next two pages of History is Personal give some indication of Gregor Smith's view of time and eternity. It begins with his recurring eschatological motif that in the Christ history has come to an end. He quotes from Kierkegaard, "in all there is possible immediacy of being, an absolute relation to the absolute."⁴⁰ History is actualised in the decisions of Man, in the accepting of responsibility Man has only the present. He indicates that common notions of eternity are of an empty future prolonged into infinity, against which he chooses to speak of eternity as filled time. "But eternity can only be understood - no, it can never be understood, only seen and lived in the present."⁴¹ Eternal life in this sense is very close to the Johannine concept of eternal life, an essential quality rather than some quantitative indication. The future may then be seen as an abstraction from the

40. History is Personal, p.13.

41. idem.

present, "without any constitutive or generative power over man."⁴²

"So everlasting life is to be perceived as constituted, really brought into being, not merely hoped for or glimpsed, or corroborated by the real life of the person in the present moment."⁴³

We are brought back as always to the understanding that personal history is reality. The encounter between the eternal spirit and the human spirit brought about through the Christ-event, the Word which was spoken in time, makes "time the vehicle and eternity the consummation of personal history."⁴⁴

We may quote the concluding words of the essay in its original form before considering a lengthy postscript. the final typescript was produced in October, 1942.

"Personal history is the continuance of the Word, in the presence, and everlasting life is continuance in the Presence speaking the Word. ... That steady continuance, not needing to recur, for it is steady, which is the perfection of history, cannot be further described. For it joins the mystery of the human person to the full glory of the eternal person, and in the Word's bright light human talk dies away."⁴⁵

This essay has illustrated the thoroughly dialogical character of Gregor Smith's theology. Indeed the essay

42. idem.

43. idem.

44. ibid. p.14.

45. idem.

was written to enable the life-giving encounter to take place. It was said above that it is in God that truth and reality coincide.⁴⁶ Gregor Smith here describes God as living truth. In a classic passage which can only be quoted in extenso Gregor Smith draws together all the traditional aspects of theology;

"Sin, grace, revelation, faith, forgiveness, community, eternal life: these are the interior harmonies which have been evolved from our theme of the personal constitution of all real life. Sin is the denial of the personal by men. Grace is the complete action by God, the perfect person, towards men. Revelation is the actual being of God in his gracious self-disclosure. Faith is the moment by moment response of the person to that revelation. Forgiveness is the result in the human person of that faithful response to the gracious revelation. Prayer is the ordered means of acknowledging that revelation. Providence is the personal concern of God who provides the means and circumstances for the whole event of faith. Community is the result, set in two worlds (the temporal and the eternal) of that response to faith. Eternal life is the result in the changing human person of the gift of God's own eternal person. "⁴⁷

In many ways this passage brings the thesis to a possible conclusion. It gathers together all the classic christian doctrines and illuminates them in terms of the personal encounter with the living God, known through his revelation in the Word. But it also raises a note without the discussion of which this thesis would be both incomplete and unfaithful to the message of Ronald

46. above p.35.

47. History is Personal, p.16.

Gregor Smith; "Prayer is the ordered means of acknowledging that revelation." It is that note that will be picked up in the final chapter. It has been in view throughout the thesis.

Before leaving History is Personal, it is worth making the point again that, thoroughly personalistic as this thesis has suggested that Gregor Smith's understanding of reality in the light of the Christian gospel is, it is not individualistic. All true human interaction in all its forms and functions is based on the eternal Word which addresses man. Community arises as a result of the response to revelation and it exists in two worlds. Again this is the point where I diverge most with Gregor Smith. For me this is a description of the being of the church as it is given by God in the event of response to him in encounter with Christ. It is separate from the world and yet exists entirely within the world and for the world. As society is "redeemed" it participates in the church. It is coincident with what Gregor Smith repeatedly calls true society.

The essay concludes with a restatement of the centrality of Christ. "Christ is God's true and living Word to the world."⁴⁸ Christ is unique and unrepeatable because it is a living statement embedded in history, fulfilling

48. *ibid.* p.17.

time. "With Christ the story of humanity came in principle to an end."⁴⁹ Again the centrality of the Atonement is underlined, and as we have shown this is not to be abstracted from the person of Christ himself. The two belong indissolubly together. "The Cross is the only means of salvation because it is God's only means of fulfilling personal life in history."⁵⁰ The very nature of that history in which God fulfils personal life is itself determined by Christ.

"Christ the living Word. Christ crucified, the full being of the eternal word on earth, and the perfection of human history as personal, Christ is history. From his being there streams, through faith, into all history the very being of history. History is Christ."⁵¹

It is possible, as we have seen, to speak of salvation in terms of Gregor Smith's own theological framework. It arises from the encounter of man with God through the Christ-event, which is itself totally centred in Christ, the living Word. Community is the result of man's experience of forgiveness. It is fully personal and therefore fully relational. This community is eschatological in character and is expressed in the life of prayer. It is to the nature of prayer in the theology of Gregor Smith that we now turn.

49. idem.

50. ibid. p.18. also J.G. Hamann, p.99.

51. ibid. p.19.

Chapter Six: Prayer

It is now twenty years since the untimely death of Ronald Gregor Smith, on his return journey from lecturing and holidaying on the Continent. This thesis has explored one particular strain of his thought as a useful theological description of personal reality. What direction does Gregor Smith have to offer to a generation for which the impetus of the "Secular Christianity" debate has lost its momentum? The answer may lie in an apparently un-noticed, as well as unpublished, essay on the Lord's Prayer, which is a "would-be followers response to the words of the prayer."¹ Clements makes only passing reference to prayer,² yet it is a significant motif in the theology of Gregor Smith. Theology begins and ends in prayer,³ prayer, which is dialogue or conversation between the two persons whom we have been describing as involved in encounter. In his Introduction to Theology lectures, he goes so far as to say that theology moves towards prayer⁴ and even further that the purpose of theology is to facilitate prayer and even that theology partakes of

1. The Lord's Prayer, Glasgow, p.1.

2. K. Clements, op. cit. p.84.

3. Atonement, p.2.

4. Introduction to Theology, p.26.

prayer;

"For in the end the only purpose of theology is to elucidate the experience of faith and thus to deepen faith, and thus to make the actuality of faith more present, more demanding and more serene. The actuality of faith is expressed in the suffering and action of prayer."⁵

The passivity and activity of prayer will be considered later in this chapter. Very early, Gregor Smith noted that "contemplation is the very spirit and beginning and means of all action."⁶ In describing the general malaise of society and the loss of respect for poetry and theology, in fact for the whole realm of the personal, that is of the spirit, Gregor Smith would surely have included a loss of understanding of prayer. Indeed he makes this explicit. In The New Man, he echoes just these ideas with the recognition that even friendship and love are becoming increasingly rare.⁷ In Secular Christianity, he recognises that there has been a "general collapse of the understanding of prayer."⁸ In his small book on Martin Buber he acknowledges Buber's yearning for a restoration of true community which is bound to a restoration of true prayer.⁹

5. ibid. p.107.

6. Still Point, p.41.

7. The New Man, p.85.

8. Secular Christianity, p206.

9. Martin Buber, p.24.

The loss of interest in prayer then is, for Gregor Smith, an indication of the failure in church and society alike to be authentic, to participate in the encounter with God offered in his self-disclosure in the Christ-event. This aspect of Gregor Smith is underlined in two small collections in the unpublished material, the first being a collection of poems on the theme of hope and love, and the other a Diary of Prayers taken from Kierkegaard's writings.¹⁰

Prayer is the actuality of faith. It is dialogic. It gives expression to the reality of the encounter between God and man. In this sense prayer underlies all that has been said in this thesis. As we saw above "prayer is the ordered means of acknowledging (that) revelation."¹¹ Prayer is essentially a matter of response. It is participation in the encounter initiated by God. It is clear from many of the poems on which we based our initial exposition of the existential viewpoint of Gregor Smith, that they are couched in the form of a dialogue or prayer. Prayer should characterise the Protestant experience of God as a vital part of that existence.¹² It expresses the relation with God established by encounter. The dialogic aspect of prayer

10. see Bibliography Section IV, Box. 5, items c and d.

11. above p.160-1, History is Personal, p.16.

12. The New Man, p.75.

is underlined in the discussion of Augustine's Confessions;

"His (Augustine's) prayer is not that of simple piety, or mystic adoration: but it is the prayer in which there is give and take, in which the reality of the Eternal Thou whom he addresses confronts the reality of his own person."¹³

The participation of prayer in this dialogue¹² is further underlined by the fact that it is the articulation of faith and that faith is given. The relation of man to God, faith, is a gift and "The gift involves a relationship with the giver."¹⁴ It is the relation of man with God in faith that gives meaning and value to human life, particularly as this is given expression "through worship, through prayer, through the multitudinous ways offered to us in a world which is the packed treasure-house of God's invitations and splendours."¹⁵

Having underlined that prayer is dialogical, it can further be seen that prayer is essentially a matter of response. H.H. Farmer said "Prayer is essentially a response of man's spirit to the ultimate as personal",¹⁶

13. Conversion IV, p.9. also Augustine and Donne: A Study in Conversion, p.150.

14. The Doctrine of God, p.72, also The New Man, p.22.

15. What is Real Life, Theology 47, (September 1944) p.206.

16. H.H. Farmer, The World and God, p.118.

and this is certainly in line with what is being discovered here of Gregor Smith. It is in this sense that he speaks of the essential responsibility of man. True responsibility is the response to the eternal in time.¹⁷ Faith is always a response and as prayer is the actualisation of faith, it too, shares the character of a response.¹⁸ Prayer is essentially an affirmative response to God as he is encountered, but it is to be remembered that it is also possible to deny what God reveals and this would seem to confirm what was suggested in the chapter on Salvation that encounter does introduce a distinction into mankind.¹⁹

Prayer is a response. It is the actualisation of faith. It is this in two particular ways, in the passivity of suffering and in the drive to action.

Waiting as a theme was explored above.²⁰ Waiting involves giving attention to reality. It also means being open to the confrontation involved in the encounter with God. Prayer is not intended simply to affirm man in his preconceived ideas. The human spirit is to be open to the challenge of the claim of God.

17. Still Point, p.48. also J.G. Hamann, p.79f.

18. Secular Christianity, p.35-7.

19. ibid. p.64. also The Lord's Prayer, p.3, 31, "we must choose sides."

20. above p.9-10, also Still Point, p.44.

Turning again to the crucial essay, History is Personal, we find there that history is dependent upon a "habit of dialogue between the eternal spirit and the human spirit."²¹ Making again the point that man's basic attitude is one of waiting, he comments

"and this is the fullness of the habit of the spirit; this the nearest to constancy and unbroken relation that is given to man. ...Faith is the habit of expectancy, a waiting for the moment to become light and radiant."²² The human spirit then, is to remain open to God, waiting in an attitude of expectancy for the encounter to come to life in the power of the eternal spirit. This is beautifully summarised in the lectures on Atonement;

prayer "is the opening of the spirit in a moment of acceptance which is in the first place entirely passive: even the will to be open is formulated in the strength of the other who awaits and gives. Then this movement becomes a two way movement, in which the one who prays is impelled into the world, of opportunity and demand. He has not left the world of prayer behind, but he has truly entered into its fullness. It is clear that this view of prayer leaves no area of life untouched."²³

This is the true secularisation of the gospel. No part of man's life is to remain untouched by the transforming encounter with God through the Christ-event. All life is to become prayer, a following of him, who calls and claims, in true responsibility.

21. History is Personal, p.8.

22. ibid. p.9.

23. Atonement, p.107.

This leads into a further aspect of prayer in that it is not merely passive. One criticism which might be levelled against Gregor Smith is that there is little or no direct social comment. Healey, summarising Oman's criticism of Schleiermacher writes as follows;

"This defective view of religion is related to a defective view of man's freedom. A man is free, according to Schleiermacher, if he is able to cultivate "a spacious individuality." This kind of freedom, however, is only possible for the well-off, or at least those who are not burdened with many practical responsibilities."²⁴

Could this criticism be applied to Gregor Smith? In the course of his lectures on ethics he acknowledges that the working classes are not at home in the church.²⁵ He does make reference in these lectures to "godly ordinary folk"²⁶ and the "extra-christian fund of heroism and simple goodness, which is good in itself, (which) does not fall outside the real orbit of Christ."²⁷ But he warns that the simplicity of this simple goodness is deceptive. "The way of the saint" he describes as a short cut to genuine christian action.²⁸

24. F.G. Healey, Religion and Reality: The Theology of John Oman., Oliver and Boyd, 1965, p.20-21.

25. The Nature of Christian Action, Systematic Theology III, Glasgow, p.12.

26. *ibid.* p.18.

27. *ibid.* p.1c.

28. *ibid.* p.18.

Ultimately christian action is dependent on God and his grace. Here he points to John Oman as being the best expositor of this theme known to him.²⁹ Prayer as it is being described by Gregor Smith is the living of the total life in dependence upon God and specifically the God who is revealed as for us in Jesus Christ. While it has to be admitted that he does not give any direct unfolding of the social and moral implications of this, the possibility is there. The epilogue to Secular Christianity makes a similar point. Addressed to the activist spirit, it asks whether;

"if I say that we are not permitted as it were to lower our sights to these humbler objectives, then are we not denying, in the name of some nebulous other-worldliness, that very secularity which I have ushered in as the secular reality of Christ?"³⁰

The epilogue is titled Prayer, and he addresses the possible accusation of quietism and a-sociality, first of all by a glance at the false activism of American evangelicalism. His positive contribution concerning prayer is again to point to complete reliance on the Spirit. "We are not able to pray properly, but the spirit looks after this. In other words, our only recourse is the Spirit."³¹ But the spirit forces us to deal with the real world, with the historical situation

29. *ibid.* p.20. J. Oman, Grace and Personality, p.22.

30. Secular Christianity, p.205.

31. *ibid.* p.207-8.

which would otherwise be avoided. So prayer rightly understood is not escapist but thoroughly realist. "Prayer, therefore, is to be understood as the anticipation in the whole of our existence of that one End which is the reality of God."³² Gregor Smith makes the distinction between prayer itself as just this engagement with life and questions concerning the forms of prayer. Prayer must have form and content but these are given by the decision taken in response to the encounter with the living God in the Christ-event. Supremely, as this thesis has sought to show, it is the Cross, which determines prayer.

"Only by way of the utter desolation of Christ's historical being on the Cross is prayer possible at all. It is thus the impossible possibility which is only found in the utmost mystery of the Spirit with us and speaking for us. There is no place for anxiety if faith holds fast, in the power of the Spirit, hoping against hope, believing against unbelief."³³

Prayer must, however, take form and Gregor Smith's early reflection on the Lord's Prayer gives many helpful indicators of the nature of that form. It is not necessary to reproduce that essay here but it would be helpful to outline the character of his treatment. He deals with the prayer in terms of eight stanzas;

32. *ibid.* p.208.

33. *ibid.* p.209. Here, too, the thought is remarkably redolent of T. S.Eliot. cf. above p.9, 35.

I. Our Father which art in Heaven.

The thrust here is on the nature of the relationship between God and man. All that we know about heaven is that it is the place where God is. The absence of God is the "material for hell".³³ What has been said of the ambiguous nature of the relation of God to men finds a resolution here, "If God is Father of all, not everyone is the son of God."³⁴ This would seem to correspond to what has been suggested above. There is a sense in which the Word of God constitutes all humanity as humanity, but there is a further sense in which only those who enter into a reciprocal relation of trust discover the fulfilment of the potential of man revealed in that same Word. In Gregor Smith's own terms only the man who receives forgiveness graciously given in the Word of God and who decides to live in the fulfilment which is the End of all human history in Christ might properly be called a son of God. He uses here the image of the prodigal son, coming to himself, being the only one who may truly say Father.

II. Hallowed be thy name.

Gregor Smith makes note of this stanza to underline the necessity of decision. If this thesis is valid then the

33. The Lord's Prayer, p.1.

34. *ibid.* p.2.

note struck here remains through out and is to be recognised in all his later work. A loss of respect for God is involved in the general loss of any commitment to the personal in society. here the holiness of God is underlined, its seriousness is established by the Cross. Love and righteousness are brought together in these two stanzas and are not to be separated.

"His cross which draws all men to himself also set some on his right hand and some on his left. It lies with you whether you fall down in mingled fear and love before him; or whether you are cast away as one who never knew what the glory of the holiness of God demands of you. It lies with you."³⁵

III. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done,
in earth as it is in heaven.

Here the emphasis falls on the theme suggested above of the passivity of prayer in which the human spirit lies open and receptive before God so that man is changed rather than confirmed by prayer. Again the note of decision for or against God's kingdom is strong. His will begins in us. The end referred to here by the petition is presently obscured by sin and evil. Nevertheless because the end has come in Christ, praying this prayer brings us into his presence. "This is the turning point in human history. Now after Jesus we can all turn to God in the assurance that he will receive us for Jesus sake."³⁶

35. *ibid.* p.8.

36. *ibid.* p.12.

IV. Give us this day our daily bread.

The need for man to live in an acknowledged dependence on God has been noted several times. It is stressed again here. Prayer is to remind us of our dependence for everything and to call forth an attitude of gratitude and faith.

V. And forgive us our debts,

as we forgive our debtors.

The reference is to our sins. God's forgiveness is not conditional, it is given. Our response, rather demonstrates the genuineness of our acceptance of God's forgiveness. This is God's claim upon us. "It is against human nature to do this; but it is Christian nature."³⁷

VI. And lead us not into temptation.

But deliver us from the evil-one.

Gregor Smith's approach to the "evil-one" was noted above.³⁸ His point is that we need to exercise caution in the face of the seriousness of evil. Twice he points to the reality of the struggle in which man is fully involved. But equally he points to the reality of the victory of Christ. "Christ has established his victory. His life of pure goodness and selflessness assures to the whole creation that God's purpose for good will triumph."³⁹ Again, however, we are exhorted to choose.

37. *ibid.* p.21.

38. above p.163.

39. The Lord's Prayer, p.30.

VIII. For Thine is the kingdom, the power and the
glory for ever.

This stanza he sees as the church's response to the prayer given by Jesus. Here he makes the point that the nameless matter as much as the heroes of the faith. It is each believer by the life of faith that "sound(s) forth the reality of God. ... from this world into the next."⁴⁰

His treatment of the Lord's prayer sets forth an approach to prayer which allows the whole of life to be lived in relation to God, which is the true secularity that Gregor Smith sought to "usher in"⁴¹

It is to be wondered what the outcome of Gregor Smith's work would have been if Christianity had offered him as rich an experience of community as the Hasidic tradition so obviously offered Martin Buber. This is the final feature of prayer that must be noticed in the closing of this thesis. True prayer arises out of community and true community is built on prayer. Prayer is a response, true responsibility. Gregor Smith tells us you can be responsible only together with others. "Community is the being together of persons in responsible action."⁴²

40. *ibid.* p.35.

41. Secular Christianity, p.205.

42. The New Man, p.82.

Here all that has been said about waiting and expectancy, about openness and possibility, finds its focus. Prayer, we are told is "the mark of this eschatological relationship"⁴³ and the church is the eschatological community established by the event of encounter with God. Prayer therefore must characterise the christian community. Gregor Smith's criticism of Heidegger in the Apologetics lectures was that his analysis of humanity lacked the essentially relational nature of man. Solitariness is, however, an essential part of community. Gregor Smith notes the example of Jesus himself, who frequently withdrew in order to be more fully available to them.

"One experiences the mystery of the other being in the mystery of one's own being. This is a participation, or mutuality, or reciprocity, of being, which is at the very heart of the biblical understanding of being. This is the sense in which the whole of life is a real dialogue of the one with the other, whether that other is another man or the Eternal other who is the ground of all being."⁴⁴

"Community is the most important of all the questions which arise out of our consideration of what man is."⁴⁵

"Real community is where there is communion, real commerce or traffic of being, between one and the other."⁴⁶

43. Atonement, p.126. also above p.25, 127.

44. Apologetics, p.70.

45. *ibid.* p.72.

46. *ibid.* p.76.

While it is not perhaps thought to be characteristic of Gregor Smith, here is a solid theological foundation for the kind of spirituality which is suggested by Henri Nouwen⁴⁷ and John Zizioulas.⁴⁸ Nouwen in particular is very close to what is being said here. He speaks of the spiritual life in terms of three inter-related movements, from loneliness to solitude, from hostility to hospitality and from illusion to prayer. So that man to become himself must come into relation with himself, with others, and with God. The emphasis in the third section, on prayer, is particularly significant in that it gives a very full exposition of the idea exposed in Gregor Smith that the essential nature of prayer is a turning to reality, a being thrust back into our historical situation by the Spirit. Nouwen deals with prayer in three chapters where he speaks firstly of prayer and the illusion of our immortality. In the second chapter he offers the spirituality of Hesychasm as a useful way of prayer for the integrating process he has been describing. The concluding chapter covers the relation between prayer and community. Here, as in Gregor Smith, the centrality of the Cross and the costliness of love and dependence is evident.

47. Henri J.M. Nouwen, Reaching Out, Collins, 1975.

48. John D. Zizioulas, Being as Communion, Darton, Longman and Todd, 1985.

"Prayer as a hopeful and joyful waiting for God is a really unhuman or superhuman task unless we realise that we do not have to wait alone. In the community of faith we can find the climate and the support to sustain and deepen our prayer and we are enabled to constantly look forward beyond our immediate and often narrowing private needs."⁴⁹

Gregor Smith argues that ultimately the only effective kind of apologetic is the lived life, that is the truly dialogic life.⁵⁰ And for the christian the place of the lived life which is an apologetic to the world is in the church in the world. Gregor Smith says of the church; "Its innermost being is one of relation, openness of being, and togetherness which is its own reason for existence."⁵¹ A further quotation will suffice to conclude this section in Gregor Smith's own words;

"Human destiny is the free response of the community of persons to the call to establish meaning in the whole of human life."⁵²

49. H. Nouwen, op. cit. p.139.

50. Apologetics, p.77.

51. *ibid.* p.78. also above p.25.

52. *ibid.* p.79.

CONCLUSION

Conclusion

This thesis has sought to show the centrality of the Christ-event to the theology of Ronald Gregor Smith. In the Christ-event, so understood, God acts to give forgiveness to man. The Atonement is Christ acting, rather than "the work of Christ" as something which may be abstracted from the whole event. It is also God acting. It is through this act that man encounters God. The forgiveness of God claims a response. This response, we have argued, creates a difference within humanity which enables us to speak of the church and the world. The church we have described as an eschatological community. Gregor Smith early rejects an "ark" concept of the church, by which we take him to mean a church which removes men from the reality of the one world. What we have sought to show is that the community of faith created by a response to the Christ-event, lives "in a different direction" to the world, "against the stream". It lives this life both in the one world and for the one world which God loves. It lives a life of prayer. This life is a "responding to the call to purposeful responsible life." Wardlaw rightly points to the importance of the question, "whence do we receive" this call? We have sought to show that the "whence" of the call or claim of God is in the Christ-event.

1. Ed. E.T. Long, op. cit. p.74.

Gregor Smith indicates that the whole of theology is "an attempt to understand and obey a claim put upon us when we face, when we are faced by, the one whom we indicate by the name God."² The givenness of human life is only rightly understood from the perspective of a truly biblical anthropology.

Gregor Smith, throughout his life and work, never lost his concern with the pastoral task. It was with a concern to deepen the understanding of the pastoral task that this thesis gained its sense of direction.

The ambiguity which has been pointed to may be resolved. Gregor Smith's prior concern is with what we may speak about. All men are God's creation. This itself is by the Word. Not all men are his sons. This also is by the Word. This is a matter for God and the solitary one and it is not open to us to divide the world on this basis. Equally we each must live responsibly, that is, in response to the claim which the Christ-event makes upon us. Faith as personal being and sin as anti-personal being are not objects in the world. God, who is the complete person, is not an object in the world. This is also true for man whose life participates in both faith and sin and is orientated in a particular direction. The call is to enter "the firm world of grace."

2. Introduction to Theology, p.1, Glasgow.

It is a call to be open to the possibilities of being revealed in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus, which is the "End" of human history. The givenness of human existence is the claim of God on human life made in the Christ-event. This gives the possibility of freedom, true personal existence, in the decision and response called for. Responsible living is therefore essentially living in response to the revelation of God in Christ. The realisation of community is essential to recognition of the revelation of God. The pastoral task might therefore be described as allowing the opportunity for the grace of God to create interpersonal relations which partake of the character of this responsible life.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

BIBLIOGRAPHY

A. WORKS BY RONALD GREGOR SMITH

This bibliography makes no attempt to be a comprehensive list of Gregor Smith's works. Rather it is a listing of works consulted in the course of this study. The Bibliography given by K.W.Clements in The Theology of Ronald Gregor Smith is essentially comprehensive. I have followed Clements systematisation. This one differs from Clements in two respects;

i) The vast majority of unpublished material listed by Clements as held by Mrs. Kathe Gregor Smith is now held in the University of Glasgow Special Collections Library. The Correspondence between Ronald Gregor Smith and Karl Barth is now held in the Barth Museum in Basle. A full listing of the material held in Special Collections Library is included to facilitate the use thereof.

ii) Clements surprisingly omits Gregor Smith's small volume on Martin Buber in the Makers of Contemporary Theology series from his bibliography, it is included here.

I. Books written by Ronald Gregor Smith.

Still Point. Pseud. Ronald Maxwell, London: Nisbet, 1943.

The New Man. London: S.C.M. Press, 1956. (The Alexander Love Lectures given at Ormond College, Melbourne, 1955).

J.G. Hamann, 1730 - 1788: A Study in Christian Existence. London: Collins, 1960. (Written from the F.D. Maurice Lectures given at Kings College, London, 1958).

Secular Christianity. London: Collins, 1966. (Lectures given at McCormick Theological Seminary, Chicago, 1964 - 1965).

Martin Buber. London, Carey Kingsgate Press, 1966. In the Makers of Contemporary Theology Series.

The Free Man. London: Collins, 1969. (Chapters 3,4,5 of The New Man together with various lectures and articles.)

The Doctrine of God. London: Collins, 1970. (To have been delivered as the Warfield Lectures at Princeton Theological Seminary in 1969. Reconstructed from manuscript and notes, by Kathe Gregor Smith and Allan D. Galloway).

II. Books and Articles translated, and Books edited by Ronald Gregor Smith.

Buber, M. I and Thou. Second edition translated with a new introduction by R. Gregor Smith and with additional postscript by the author, Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1957.

Buber, M. Between Man and Man. Translated and with Introduction by R. Gregor Smith. London: Collins, 1961.

Buber, M. Elements of the Interhuman. Translated by R. Gregor Smith in Psychiatry 20 (May 1957). Reprinted in Buber's The Knowledge of Man. London: George Allen and Unwin, 1965.

Ebeling, G. The Nature of Faith. Translated by R. Gregor Smith. London: Collins, 1961.

Jaspers, K. The European Spirit. Translated and with Introduction by R. Gregor Smith. London: S.C.M. Press, 1948.

Kierkegaard, S., The Last Years. Journals 1853-55. Ed. and Translated by R. Gregor Smith with an Introduction. London: Collins, 1965.

Smith, R. Gregor, ed. The Enduring Gospel. Essays in Honour of Hugh Martin. London: S.C.M. Press, 1950.

Smith, R. Gregor, ed. World Come of Age. Essays on Dietrich Bonhoeffer. London: Collins, 1966.

III. Published Articles by Ronald Gregor Smith.

Many of the following articles are included amongst the material in the Glasgow University Special Collections Department.

The Church as a Sign upon the Earth The British Weekly, October 16, 1941, p.25.

Words Theology 44, April 1942, pp.220-227.

What Christ Shows Us of God The British Weekly, April 9, 1942, p.15.

The Canonical Evidence for the Doctrine of God the Creator Evangelical Quarterly 14, April 1942, pp.88-94.

Must Preaching Be Interesting? The British Weekly, July 23, 1942, p.190.

Retribution and Mercy are One in God Hibbert Journal 40, July 1942, pp.326-330.

Augustine and Donne: A Study in Conversion Theology 45, August 1942, pp.147-159.

The Nineteenth Psalm: Nature and Grace The British Weekly, November 26, 1942, p.101.

The Living and Speaking God: A Study of Hamann's Doctrine of the Word Hibbert Journal 42, April 1944, pp.198-203.

What is Real Life ? Theology 47, September 1944 pp.203-206.

Mr. Eliot's "The Family Reunion" in the Light of Martin Buber's "I and Thou" Theology 50, February 1947, pp.59-64.

Editorial Scottish Periodical 1.2, Summer 1948, p.1.

A Warning About Kierkegaard Scottish Periodical 1.2, pp.80-83.

The Thought of Martin Buber Burning Glass Paper 18, 1950.

Karl Jaspers on Theology and Philosophy Hibbert Journal 49, October 1950, pp.62-66.

An Exchange of Notes on T.S. Eliot. A Critique Theology Today 7, January 1951, pp.503-506.

Kierkegaard's Library Hibbert Journal 50, October 1951, pp.18-21.

History and Self-Understanding Theology Today 11,
October 1954, pp.335-341.

Is Christianity Intelligible? Theology 58, April 1955,
pp.124-128.

How Does the Christian Know? Religion in Education,
Autumn 1955, pp.3-9.

True Conversation Common Ground 9, September 1955,
pp.7-12.

General Introduction The Library of Philosophy and
Theology, earlier volumes.

Man's Encounter with God The Listener 57, 11 April
1957, p600f.

University Sermon The Cambridge Review 79, February 15,
1958, pp.351-355.

Articles in Dictionary of Christian Ethics, Ed. by John
Macquarrie London: S.C.M. Press Ltd., 1965.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer pp.33-34.

Martin Buber. pp.36-37.

Enlightenment p.105.

Johann Georg Hamann p.144.

Soren Kierkegaard pp.188-189.

Worldliness pp.363-364.

Bonhoeffer 21 Years After The Methodist Recorder, April
7, 1966, p.1.

Martin Buber's View of The Interhuman The Jewish
Journal of Sociology 8, June 1966, pp.64-80.

Technology and Ethics: A Theological Comment Contact,
May 1968, pp.26-29.

The Meaning of Secular Theology Venture Magazine,
Glasgow, June 1968.

IV. Unpublished Material held in the University of Glasgow Library. Access Number; M.S.Gen. 1095.

Since Keith Clements compiled his careful and thorough bibliography for the work of Ronald Gregor Smith most, if not all the material in the care of Mrs. Gregor Smith has passed into the care of Glasgow Special Collections Department. Clements has first of all listed all published material in order of date of publication. Of course many manuscripts of work which was eventually published are also held by the library. For further information and for the library's cataloguing purposes a simple list by box and file is here appended.

Box 1.

File 1: a) Preparing for the ministry. (1938) Notes for a book on ministry. Revised and included in Turning Point, below.

b) Turning Point (Aug.1944) beginning of a book on ministry. Plus typescript of open letters to a faithful friend; i) Christianity and Church ii) Christianity and Dogma.

c) Copy of History is Personal. (1942)

File 2: a) Papers for the Church of Scotland/Scandinavian Churches Conference held at Nordfjordeid, Norway. 10-14. August,, 1968. inc. I.Faith and Doctrine. Our Understanding of the Bible as the Word of God.cf. Doctrine of God ch.1.

b) Speech to the people of Nordfjordeid, 12 Aug. 1968.

File 3: Note and Letters re. publication of Martin Buber in translation.

File 4: Manuscript for Martin Buber. in the Makers of Contemporary Theology series, Carey Kingsgate Press.

File 5: Contribution to "Danish Kierkegaard Encyclopaedia." 1968.

File 6: Note on Kierkegaard.

a) The Journals of Soren Kierkegaard. Paper read to the Danish Institute, Edinburgh, Oct.30, 1963.

Box 2.

File 1: a) Poems; mainly 1941-42.

b) Copy of The Scottish Periodical, Vol.1 No.2 inc. The European Spirit. Karl Jaspers, trans. R.G.S. and A Warning about Kierkegaard. R. Gregor Smith, p.80-84.

File 2: Notes on the Post-Renaissance Man - Early paper on the Modern predicament.

a) Christian Faith and Secularism. Oct.4-5, 1965.

b) The Meaning of Secular Theology, June, 1968.

c) Post Renaissance Man. published in Conflicting Images of Man. and The Free Man.

File 3: Draught of Princeton Lectures - cf. The Doctrine of God.

File 4: a) An extensive collection of Reviews, mainly in typescript.

b) Hamann and Kierkegaard. Manuscript of lecture for Manchester University, March 19, 1963

File 5: a) The Listener Jan.21, 1960. The Disappearing God. A discussion between J.P. Corbett and R.Gregor Smith.

b) A Theological Perspective of the Secular. The Christian Scholar. Vol. XLIII, Mar.1960.

Box 3.

File 1: Hamann and Kierkegaard. - Nationalism

a) The Hamann Renaissance The Christian Century. Jun.29, 1960. p.768 - 769.

b) Letter to John Baillie, 7.3.60. re. his appreciation of J.G. Hamann. expressed to publishers.

c) Review of J.G. Hamann A Study in Christian Existence. - Fredrick Coppleston.

d) Review of J.G. Hamann. Times Literary Supplement Friday, 15 April, 1960.

e) Review J.G.Hamann. Glasgow Herald, Mar.31, 1960 Karl M. Abenheimer.

f) Copy of letter from John Baillie to Richard Simon, 1.3.60.

g) Letter to J.C. O'Flaherty. 14.2.61.

h) Review; J.G.Hamann. The Listener, Oct.27, 1960. Montgomery Beligon.

i) Letter to Dr. Palmer re contribution to Festschrift for Dr. Merlan. Jun.6, 1967.

File 2: Preparation for edition of Kierkegaard Journals, Notes plus translations.

File 3: Notes on Kierkegaard plus papers on Kierkegaard. delivered by post-graduates to colloquium on Kierkegaard.

File 4: "Notes and Logia, Old and New"
a) Faith, or the New Humanity, or Humanism and Faith, or The Relation of Humanism to Faith, with constant reference to the Life and Works of Soren Kierkegaard. Sept. 1938.

b) Talk on Denmark to Women's Guild, L.M. Selkirk, 18.10.43.

File 5: a) Notes, apparently not included in J.G. Hamann.

b) Script for Maurice Lectures, King's College, 1958.

c) Correspondence re. same.

File 6: (Envelope) Notes on Buber.

a) General

b) Elements of the Interhuman. Dec. 1965
Translation by R.Gregor Smith, Typescript. pub. as above.

c) Chapter 3 of Martin Buber.

d) Correspondence with Rev. Vernon Sproxton re. programme with Buber.

e) The Way of Wisdom. Talk for B.B.C. Third Programme. 23.2.56

f) Transcript for "Viewpoint." 14.2.61 also on Buber.

g) Martin Buber's View of the Interhuman. Typescript.

Box 4.

File 1: Glaube in einer Sakularen Welt. Bochum University 23.1.67

File 2: The Nature of Faith. - Chapter 1 of The Free Man

File 3: Heidleberg Lectures 1967. Roots and Problems of Secularism. I Untitled

II The Death of God Theologians

III Historical Man

IV The Reality of God.

File 4: "Mainly Wartime essays."

a) Existential Theology Crieff conference on the Action of the Church. 4-7th. Oct. 1943.

b) Montanism - c.6,000 words, 26.1.38

c) A Beginning with Hamann. A Note about his Theory of Language.

d) Tudor Poetry as a preparation for Spencer

e) God the Creator - The British Weekly
Dec.25, 1941; The Church as a Sign upon the Earth B.W.
Oct.16, 1941; What Christ shows us of God. B.W. Apr.9,
1942; Must Preaching be Interesting? B.W. Jul.23,
1942.

File 5: Deitrich Bonhoeffer Address for Southern
Methodist University, Dallas, Texas, 4.12.64.

File 6: The Time of Mystery. T.V. Programme for
Easter, 1962, with correspondence.

File 7. Modern Studies on the Life of Jesus,
notes.

a) Two lectures Jesus Christ and Modern
Theology Post-Graduate refresher course, Dunblane, May
13, 1964.

I Modern Studies in the Life of Jesus
II History and Faith.

File 8. a) A Theological Perspective of the
Secular

b) Correspondence re. Swanwick Conference
Summer 1962, S.C.M. World Youth.

Box 5.

File 1: a) Two talks for S.C.M. theological
colleges conference, April, 1959. on The New Man. : I
The Background of the New Man, II The Gospel of the New
Man.

b) The Way of Wisdom, incomplete (cf.
above.)

c) Demythologising. Revision of an
Address April 1952, given at several universities in
North America.

d) Man in the Eighteenth Century.

e) 400. Jahrfeier der Universitat Jena,
1-5 Sept. 1958.

f) Protestantism 12.1.52

g) History is Personal.

h) God in Eclipse. B.B.C. Third
Programme. Apr. 1953

i) Summary of Troeltsch lecture, 1922
"The Ideas of Natural Law and Humanity."

j) Some Implications of Demythologising (2
copies)

k) British Theology Today. English and
German Draft.

l) The Roots of Existentialism.

m) I am the Good Shepherd. Meditation for
Divinity Students. 3.12.58.

n) Two Sparrows and the Hairs of Your
Head. Birmingham, 23.2.51.

o) Reviews: Revelation and Existence: A Study in the Theology of Rudolf Bultmann. by H.P.Owen, University of Wales Press., Pointing the Way. by Martin Buber, trans. Maurice Freedman.

p) True Conversation B.B.C. Third Programme 5.2.55.

q) Notes on Rom.3:21-26 The Righteousness of God Marburg, May, 1937. An exegetical study read and sustained by the Professor of New Testament at Edinburgh University.

r) Human Encounter, notes and correspondence re. a possible broadcast.

s) A Problem in Communication or Is Christianity Intelligible? B.B.C. Third Programme, 11.5.54.

t) The Problem of Communication. Feb. 1954

u) True Conversation.

File 2:

a) Mind Your Language. Humphrey Palmer B.B.C. Third Programme 28.11.66. commenting on the Secular Christianity Debate between R.Gregor Smith and Paul van Buren.

b) The Essence of Christianity - notes.

c) The Death of God. William Hamilton. B.B.C. Third Programme, 5.11.66.

File 3:

a) Secular Christianity - I Faith. IV Is the Resurrection a Historical Fact?

VII The Crisis about God.

b) Post-Renaissance Man. rewritten as a lecture from original essay for symposium.

c) Sources of hope/of love. Selected poems and sayings.

d) Diary of Prayers taken from Soren Kierkegaards writings.

e) A Theological Perspective of the Secular.- notes.

Box 6.

File 1: The Atonement. Lectures at Glasgow University, Systematic Theology II, given 1957, revised 62, 63.

File 2: Introduction to Theology. Lectures given at Glasgow University, Systematic Theology I, Sept.66.

Box 7.

File 1: Heidleberg Lectures. (cf. Box 4, File 3.)

III Historical Man

IV The Historicity of God

V The Death of God Theologians.

File 2: Translation of a letter from R. Bultmann.
14.1.64.

File 3:

a) Extensive notes for Princeton
Lectures- used in Doctrine of God.

Box 8. Sermons Selkirk. 1939 - 42.

Box 9.

File 1:

a) Vocation or Calling. Lectures at
Glasgow University, Systematic Theology III Nov.58.

b) Christian Ethics, a Christian Action.
Lectures at Glasgow University, Systematic Theology III
Oct.59 - a revision of a short course on The Sermon on
the Mount of Jan.58, also Oct. 61, 62, 63.

c) A Theological perspective of the
Secular A paper given at a conference at The Ecumenical
Institute, Bossey, Switzerland. Sept,59. Published in
The Christian Scholar Vol. XLIII Mar. 1960. cf. Box 5,
File 3, item e.

d) Notes on Ethics.

File 2: Apologetics Lectures at Glasgow
University, Systematic Theology III 1957.

In addition to the nine box files itemised above there
are fifteen other files, unlisted;

File 1: a) History is Personal.

b) Conversion. Sermon, Mansfield College,
Oxford, Nov.19, 1954.

Conversion. Four chapters of a
proposed book.

c) The Lord's Prayer an essay of about 9,000
words.

d) Unused pieces in preparation for The New
Man.

e) Christianity and the Church - An open
letter to a faithful country minister.

f) The Art of Publishing

I A Publisher's Reader

II For would be Authors

III The Rewards of Authorship.

g) Reflection on the Task of Theology Today .

12.3.56

h) The Christian Confession. - A Homage to
Soren Kierkegaard, if he will have it.

i) Imagery and Symbolism in Religious Thought.
- a draft talk to Edinburgh University Staff discussion group Nov.1, 1959.

j) Christianity and Power.

I. Powerless People

II. Untitled

III. The Freedom of the Christian.

k) Christian Faith and Religious Practices.

Some theses - 1966-67.

l) Baptism as the New Obedience. A paper prepared for the Lutheran-Reformed Consultation, Arnoldshain, April, 1959.

m) The Nature of Faith. A paper for the S.C.M. conference, Swanwick, Jul. 1961

n) Hidden in Christ A meditation on the meaning of Christmas.

o) Bonhoeffer and the Demythologising Controversy. Two letters concerning Bultmann's essay Demythologising.

p) "The New Theology" A personal record of the Conference of University Teachers Group, Oxford, April, 1965.

q) Karl Barth's assessment of the Prison Letters - from a letter to Superintendent P.W. Herrenbruk, Dec.21, 1952.

File 2: (Envelope)

a) Bibliography

b) Essays in Journals; i) Breakthrough 14
Religious or Human? p.11-16 reprinted from Conflicting Images of Man. ed. W. Nicholls.

ii) For the remaking of man - Come Holy Spirit. International Conference.

iii) Our Understanding of the Bible as the Word of God. - Norway (cf. above)

iv) Bonhoeffer and This-Worldly Transcendence. A paper for the Oxford Theological Club. 3.7.57

v) Jesus Christ and Modern Theology.

vi) Six articles in Theology;

April '42 p.220-227 Words

Aug. '42 p.93-95 Studies in Texts Matt.5:48

Sept. '42 p.147-159 Augustine and Donne: A Study in Conversion.

Jun. '43 p.127-136 Tertullian and Montanism.

Sept '44 p.203-206 What is Real Life?

April '55 p.124-128 Is Christianity Intelligible?

vii) Breakthrough 15
The New Morality An Introduction. p.2-6

viii) Hamann and

Kierkegaard in Festschrift for R. Bultmann.

- ix) Theology Today -
Oct. 54 History and Self Understanding. p.335 -341
Jan. 51 An Exchange of Notes on T.S. Eliot A Critique.
p.503-506
- x) Common Ground. Sept-
Oct. 55 A True Conversation p.7-12
- xi) Evangelical
Quarterly April 42. The Canonical evidence for the
Doctrine of God the Creator. p.88-94
- xii) Religion in
Education S.C.M. Press Autumn 1955 How Does the
Christian Know? p.3-9 from a broadcast, March, 1954.
- xiii) Four Articles in
Hibbert Journal; Jul. 42 Retribution and Mercy are One
in God. p.326-330
- Oct. 50 Karl Jaspers on Theology and
Philosophy p.62-66
- Oct. 51 Kierkegaard's Library p.18-21
Jan. 58 Review of History and Eschatology by
R. Bultmann. p.200-202.
- xiv) Methodist Recorder
April 1966 Bonhoeffer 21 years After. p.1
- xv) The British Weekly
Nov. 26, 1942 The Nineteenth Psalm Nature and
Grace. p.101
- xvi) Guardian, 11 Aug.
1962. Church, State and Freedom Can 1960 learn from
1560?
- xvii) Zeitschrift Fur
Theologie und Kirche: Christlicher Glaube und
Sakularismus.

File 3.(Envelope)

- a) Correspondence re. The Disappearing God.
(cf. above)
- b) The Meaning of Jesus A Discussion beteen
R.Gregor Smith, and J.P. Corbett 3.7.61. With an
Introduction and Commentary by David Jenkins.
- c) Viewpoint. B.B.C.1 Script Dr. John Marsh.
Notes on Secular Christianity.
- d) The Secular Christian Debate. B.B.C. Third
Programme. 23.11.66 R.Gregor Smith, Paul van Buren and
Rev.David Edwards.

File 4. (Envelope) Sermons 1956-1967.

- a) Glasgow Cathedral 5.5.57 Matt.11:30 My
Burden is Light.
- b) Glasgow University Good Friday '57
Lk.23:46 Father into Thy hands I Commend My Spirit
- c) Cambridge Review LXXIX No.1925 15.2.58.

University Sermon. p.351-355 Preached 9.2.58. Is.XLV 15,
Verily Thou art a God that hideth thyself, O God of
Israel the Saviour.

d) Glasgow University 7.12.58 Mk.13:31-33
(also Faculty Sermon, 6.10.57)

e) Glasgow University 11.12.60 Jn.14:6 I am
the Way, the Truth and the Life

f) Glasgow University 10.12.61 Matt.11:2-6

g) Glasgow University 9.12.62 Ps.

8/Heb.2:9

h) Glasgow University 8.12.63 Phil.3:12-14

(Rewritten for McCormick, Chigargo.)

i) Glasgow University 12.12.65 Rom.15:13

j) Glasgow University 11.12.66 Jn.14:9

k) Glasgow University 10.12.67 Eph.4:13

l) Iona Community 18.11.60 Faith and Power.

m) Talk for the Glasgow Committee for
Christian Jewish Relations 5.12.60 The Christian
Conception of God.

File 5. Notes for Seminar on Anselm : Cur Deus Homo
including note 15.12.59 on K.Barth Fides Quaerens
Intellectum.

File 6.

a) Notes for Introduction to Theology,
Systematic Theology I (cf. above)

b) Philosophy of Religion - p.1-41 rewritten
elsewhere.

Systematic Theology I 1957, 61, 67

File 7.

Introduction To Theology - original 1956
version. Systematic Theology I taught 56, 57, 58, 59,
60, 61, 63-4, 65.

File 8. Notes, mainly on Martin Buber.

File 9.

a) Baptism as the New Obedience (cf. above)

b) Notes on Baptism and The Lord's Supper.

c) Brief notes on Ministry.

File 10.

- a) B.B.C. Third Programme
30.3.49 The Thought of Martin Buber.
- b) God in Eclipse. (cf. above)
- c) for the Hibbert journal. Distance and
Relation by Martin Buber translated R.Gregor Smith.

File 11.

Note on the future of Trinity College 26.6.57
Report of Working Party on The Shape of the Ministry -
A.D. Galloway. Correspondence.

File 12.

- a) University Life Behind the Iron Curtain.
A.B.C. Melbourne, Jun.1955.
- b) Oxford Theological Club Conference. 29.6.54
The Mission of the Church - To Whom is the Mission
Directed?
- c) Situation of Present Day Anglo-Saxon
Literature.
- d) A Visit to Germany. 20.7.53
- e) John Knox's View of Church Worship and
Church Government.
- f) What does Christianity say about Persons?
- g) True Conversation (cf. above)
- h) Is Christianity Intelligible? (cf. above)

File 13.

- a) Martin Buber's View of the Interhuman.
Jewish Journal of Sociology, Jun.1966
- b) Martin Buber. Manuscript for Carey
Kingsgate Press.

File 14. Very brief notes for a special seminar.

File 15. Introduction to Theology Systematic
Theology I Revised text cf. above.

Note. Correspondence with R. Bultmann, is also in the
Special Collections Department but does not yet have an
access reference.

B. Works, Other than By Ronald Gregor Smith.

Anderson, R.S., Historical Transcendence and the Reality of God. London: Geoffrey Chapman, 1975.

Baelz, P., Christian Theology and Metaphysics. London: Epworth, 1966.

Baillie, D.M., God was in Christ. London: Faber and Faber, 1956.

Baillie, J., Our Knowledge of God. London: O.U.P., 1939.

_____, Invitation to Pilgrimage. London: O.U.P., 1942.

_____, The Idea of Revelation in Recent Thought. New York and London: Colombia University Press, 1956.

_____, The Sense of the Presence of God. London: O.U.P., 1962.

Barth, K. Church Dogmatics. Vol. I/1 Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1936; and I/2, 1956.

Bonhoeffer, D., Act and Being. London: Collins, 1961.

_____, Letters and Papers from Prison. London: Collins, 1963.

Buber, M., I and Thou. (Trans. R. Gregor Smith.) Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 2nd. Edition 1957.

_____, Eclipse of God. London: Gollancz, 1953.

_____, Between Man and Man. (Translation and Introduction by R. Gregor Smith) London: Collins, 1961.

Bultmann, R., Faith and Understanding. London: S.C.M., 1969.

Busch, E., Karl Barth. His life from letters and autobiographical texts. London: S.C.M. Press, 1976.

Campbell, C.A. On Selfhood and Godhood. London: George Allen and Unwin, 1957.

Clements, K.W., The Theology of Ronald Gregor Smith. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 1986.

Cox, H. The Secular City. London: Penguin, 1965.

Ebeling, G. The Nature of Faith. Trans. R. Gregor Smith, London: Collins, 1961.

_____, Word and Faith. Trans. J.W. Leitch, London: S.C.M. Press, 1963.

_____, Introduction to a Theological Theory of Language. Trans. R.A. Wilson, London: Collins, 1973.

_____, The Study of Theology. Trans. D.A. Priebe, London: Collins, 1979.

Eliot, T.S., The Complete Poems and Plays of T.S. Eliot. London, Faber and Faber, 1969.

Evans, G.R. and A.D. Galloway, Ed. The Science of Theology. Basingstoke: Marshall Pickering, 1986.

Farmer, H.H., The World and God. London: Nisbet, 1935.

_____, God and Men. London: Nisbet, 1948.

Ferre, F., Language, Logic and God. London: Collins, 1970.

Friedman, M.S., Martin Buber: The Life of Dialogue. London: Routledge, Kegan and Paul, 1955.

Frei, H., The Identity of Jesus Christ. Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1975

_____, The Eclipse of Biblical Narrative. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1974

Galloway, A.D., The Cosmic Christ. London: Nisbet, 1951.

_____, Faith in a Changing Culture. London: George Allen and Unwin, 1967.

Healey, F.G., Ed. Prospect for Theology, Essays in Honour of H.H. Farmer. London: Nisbet, 1966.

_____, Religion and Reality, The Theology of John Oman. Edinburgh and London: Oliver and Boyd, 1965.

Heim, K., God Transcendent. Trans. E.P. Dickie, London: Nisbet, 1935.

_____, Jesus The World's Perfector. Trans. D.H. van Daalen. Edinburgh and London: Oliver and Boyd. 1959.

Hepburn, R.W., Christianity and Paradox. Critical Studies in Twentieth-Century Theology. London: Watts, 1958

Jaspers, K. The European Spirit. (Translation and Introduction by R. Gregor Smith. London: S.C.M. Press, 1948.

Long, E.T., (Editor) God, Secularisation and History: Essays in Memory of Ronald Gregor Smith. Columbia: University of South Carolina Press, 1974.

Macquarrie, J., Twentieth Century Religious Thought. London: S.C. M. Press, 1965, Second Edition 1981.

McKinney, R.W.A., (Editor) Creation, Christ and Culture. Studies in Honour of T.F. Torrance. Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1976.

Nouwen, H.J.M., Reaching Out. London: Collins, 1976.

Passmore, J. The Perfectability of Man. London: Duckworth, 1970.

Penelhum, T., Problems of Religious Knowledge. London: Macmillan, 1971.

Phillips, J.A. The Form of Christ in the World. A Study of Bonhoeffer's Christology. London: Collins, 1967.

Polanyi, M. Personal Knowledge. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1958.

Sadler, W.A. Ed. Personality and Religion. London: S.C.M. Press, 1970.

Shoemaker, S. & Swinburne, R. Personal Identity. Oxford: Blackwell, 1984.

Sutherland, S.R., God, Jesus and Belief. The Legacy of Theism. Oxford: Blackwell, 1984.

Taylor, J.V., The Go-Between God. London: S.C.M. Press, 1972.

Tuck, W.P. Knowing God: Religious Knowledge in the Theology of John Baillie. Washington: University Press of America, 1978.

Webb, C.C.J. Divine Personality and Human Life. London: George Allen and Unwin, 1920.

Zizioulas, J.D., Being as Communion. Studies in Personhood and the Church. London: Darton, Longman and Todd, 1985.

