

THE UNIVERSITY OF GLOUCESTERSHIRE

JOHN BAILLIE'S EPISTEMOLOGY OF MEDIATED IMMEDIACY:  
ITS LOGIC, IMPORTANCE FOR BAILLIE'S MEDIATING THEOLOGY,  
AND PROMISE AS A MODEL OF REVELATORY RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

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## ABSTRACT

The field of academic theology is presently maintaining the following about the critical thought of the Scottish thinker John Baillie (1886-1960): (1) Baillie's so-called "mediating theology" does not have a concept to contribute to contemporary Christian thought; (2) Baillie's concept of "mediated immediacy" is important primarily for Baillie's thought in his *Our Knowledge of God* (1939); (3) mediated immediacy's logic about knowledge of God is severely convoluted. Received positions which support the field's marginalization of mediated immediacy's contemporary relevance in particular, they come with a concession: (4) the field's confusion about mediated immediacy's meaning—this, as evidenced in over 75 years' worth of competing interpretations about mediated immediacy's logic, in particular.

This thesis centers primarily on Baillie's concept of mediated immediacy, taking as its primary aim the resolution of research issues (1-4). In doing so, it demonstrates that previous research has underestimated: the staying power of Baillie's mediating theology in general, mediated immediacy's importance for Baillie's mediating theology in particular, and mediated immediacy's potential as a contribution to contemporary Christian thought. Along the way, it resolves several research issues which have been occasioned by perennial confusion about the logic of mediated immediacy's normative epistemology and descriptive epistemology in particular. Research contributions about the logic of mediated immediacy's epistemology *per se*, these derive from three additional research contributions: a diachronic trace of the development of Baillie's mediating theology (Baillie research has sought a comprehensive and cogent ordering of Baillie's non-systematically articulated critical thought; this thesis provides it, by identifying Baillie's epistemic and apologetic preoccupations across his critical thought's roughly 35-year development); a modeling of mediated immediacy's logic (previously absent in a research corpus whose literature has been replete with confusion), that logic's expression in what is found to be, contrary to the thrust of previous research, a concept of mediated immediacy that serves at least four functions for Baillie's mediating theology; and, a comprehensive and rigorous critical evaluation of mediated immediacy's

epistemology (also previously absent in Baillie research literature), a multi-disciplinary evaluation of its logic (from contemporary philosophical-epistemological, empirical-psychological and theological-epistemological perspectives), included. An evaluation warranted by the multi-disciplinary scope of Baillie's mediating theology, as well as by Baillie's employment of his rather versatile concept of mediated immediacy, this evaluation considers mediated immediacy's now robustly evaluated logic's consequences for core aspects of Baillie's mediating theology, including Baillie's ideas of knowledge of God, divine action, divine revelation and religious experience.

The definitive work on John Baillie's concept of mediated immediacy, this thesis is essential for those with an interest in John Baillie's critical thought. Amongst other things, the thesis challenges positions widely held by John Baillie research. For example, it demonstrates that a nascent form of mediated immediacy existed in Baillie's thought before the concept's first explicit mention in the mediating theologian's 1939 publication *Our Knowledge of God*. Here is a novel interpretation in the research. Furthermore, whereas previous research has rightly observed that Baillie's critical thought gravitates toward the problems of revelation and knowledge of God in general, this thesis demonstrates that Baillie's mediating theology focuses on one problem in particular—across the roughly 35-year span of its development: the problem of the epistemological relationship between direct knowledge and indirect knowledge for knowledge of God. In addition, this thesis demonstrates that Baillie's latter mediating theology (post-1939) provides a stronger doctrine of the Holy Spirit than that found in Baillie's earlier critical thought.

This thesis may also be of value to persons with broader interests, including the epistemic interplay between aspects of philosophy of religion, philosophical theology, and empirically-based interpretations of the phenomena of religious experience.



### **AUTHOR'S DECLARATION**

I declare that the work in this thesis was carried out in accordance with the regulations of the University of Gloucestershire and is original except where indicated by specific reference in the text. No part of the thesis has been submitted as part of any other academic award. The thesis has not been presented to any other education institution in the United Kingdom or overseas.

Any views expressed in the thesis are those of the author and in no way represent those of the University.

Signed:....



Date: .....July 25, 2015.....

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This thesis is dedicated in loving memory to my mom, who died while I was pursuing the DPhil at Oxford University.

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**LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS**

- CRE Christian Religious Experience
- DI Directly Indirect
- IOR The Interpretation of Religion*
- IRRT The Idea of Revelation in Recent Thought*
- MI Mediated Immediacy
- MT Mediating Theology
- MTPP Mediating Theologian's Primary Problem
- OKG Our Knowledge of God*
- POI Problem of Intentionality
- ROR The Roots of Religion in the Human Soul*
- SPG The Sense of the Presence of God*
- UKG Universal Knowledge of God

*“The specific proposals and methodological moves made by John [Baillie]... cannot usefully be repeated in a quite different context decades later. Is it then possible to distill an essence from [his] work, from whose elements new theological programmes can somehow be cloned, as in the dinosaurs in Jurassic Park? Clearly not? Dinosaurs will only flourish in an appropriately contemporary environment, as will theologians.”<sup>1</sup>*

## **INTRODUCTION: JOHN BAILLIE’S MEDIATING THEOOGY: DINOSAURIAN?**

When the Scottish philosophical theologian John Baillie (1886-1960) died, he was widely regarded as “one of the most highly respected theologians in Christendom.”<sup>2</sup> Baillie’s distinguished academic career, which had included several posts in American, Canadian and Scottish academic institutions, including Chair of Divinity, Edinburgh University (1934-1956), testifies to such acclaim. Indeed, “Many of the most famous chairs in the English speaking world from the nineteen-forties onward” studied under John (and Donald) Baillie, notes Cheyne.<sup>3</sup> Baillie’s writing was also widely received in academic circles during Baillie’s day. Fey, for example, observes that for “many competent researchers the best book on Christian apologetics published in [Baillie’s] time was *Our Knowledge of God* (1939)”.<sup>4</sup> After *Our Knowledge of God’s* success, Baillie was promoted to several distinguished church-related and administrative positions.<sup>5</sup> Here, too, Baillie distinguished himself. Indeed, Mackay<sup>6</sup> regards John Baillie as “the leading

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<sup>1</sup>George M. Newlands, *John and Donald Baillie: Transatlantic Theology*, Vol. 10, *Religions and Discourse*, James Francis (Ed.) (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2002), p. 316.

<sup>2</sup>Harold E. Fey (ed.), Obituary for John Baillie, "The Christian Century", Oct. 12, 1960, p. 1172.

<sup>3</sup>Alec Cheyne, “The Baillie Brothers: A Biographical Introduction”, p. 21. In *Christ, Church and Society: Essays on John Baillie and Donald Baillie*, ed. David A.S. Fergusson (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1993).

<sup>4</sup>Fey, *ibid.*

<sup>5</sup>For example: Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland (1943-4); Principal of New College Edinburgh and Dean of the Faculty of Divinity (1950-6); Co-President of the World Council of Churches (1954-60); Chaplain to the King in Scotland (1947-52); Chaplain to the Queen in Scotland (1952-6); Extra Chaplain to the Queen in Scotland (1956-60).

<sup>6</sup>John A. Mackay, "John Baillie, A Lyrical Appraisal", *Scottish Journal of Theology*, Vol. 9, 1956, pp. 225-235.

mediational theologian of [his] time” and “probably the most outstanding Scottish theologian in the mid-century [20<sup>th</sup>] century years”.<sup>7</sup> In light of Baillie’s personal impact, Mackay’s estimation is not without warrant.

That was yesterday, however; and as Newlands suggests in the opening passage, the field of academic theology is hardly persuaded that John Baillie’s thought has anything to offer the field today. Can it be rightly said that Baillie’s thought is dead, however? Is it entirely devoid of a concept or doctrine of value to contemporary Christian thought? This introductory chapter examines research which gets at these and related questions. It begins with a review, methodical ordering, and critical analysis of over fifty-plus years of scholarly criticism aimed at Baillie’s so-called “mediating theology”. It then addresses research debate about one of that mediating theology’s concepts, Baillie’s concept of mediated immediacy. In light thereof, I argue that contemporary Christian thought’s consensus position, John Baillie’s critical content is without contemporary theological relevance, is suspect. The chief ground for my claim is that the field has failed to evidence an understanding of Baillie’s concept of mediated immediacy. A concept repeatedly identified by research as important for Baillie’s mediating theology, it is one presently in need of “serious theological attention”,<sup>8</sup> as Fergusson has maintained. The chapter finishes with an overview of how this thesis gives mediating immediacy such attention.

### **1.1. BAILLIE’S MEDIATING THEOLOGY: HISTORIANS’ EVALUATION OF ITS ENDURING VALUE**

Research on theological-doctrinal history (e.g., modern Christian thought; history of Christian thought; ideas of revelation) in general, coupled with scholarly evaluations of Baillie’s mediating theology in particular, evidence that academic theology does not regard Baillie’s critical content as being of substantial value for contemporary Christian thought.

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<sup>7</sup> *Ibid.* Quotes from p. 228.

<sup>8</sup> David A.S. Fergusson, *John and Donald Baillie: Selected Writings* (Edinburgh: Saint Andrews Press, 1997), p. 3.

We begin with a consideration of general surveys of contemporary Christian thought, taking firstly Ford's *The Modern Theologians*.<sup>9</sup> An influential and comprehensive British exposition of key developments in modern Christian thought, it remarks of Baillie's "mediating theology" merely that it was "moving away from the Kantian outlook which shaped [Baillie] as a younger theologian" around 1937.<sup>10</sup> Cunliffe-Jones's British publication, *A History of Christian Doctrine*, likewise fails to find staying power in the critical content of Baillie's mediating theology: all that one is told, is that it advanced "the normal, orthodox assertion" that knowledge of God "is not the result of an inference of any kind".<sup>11</sup> Transatlantic American evaluations of the so-called "transatlantic" theologian's<sup>12</sup> critical thought also marginalize the present value of Baillie's mediating theology. Consider, for example, Grenz and Olson's *20<sup>th</sup> Century Theology: God and the World in a Transitional Age*.<sup>13</sup> An historical survey centered upon the development of two doctrines which are emphasized in Baillie's critical thought, the doctrines of God and knowledge of God, this work accordingly recognizes Baillie's *The Idea of Revelation in Recent Thought*: here is a "very positive survey and evaluation" of twentieth century ideas of non-propositional revelation.<sup>14</sup> Praising thus Baillie's astute acumen and judicious evaluation of other theologians' ideas of revelation, the work is silent on Baillie's own idea of revelation. The same goes for Olson's quite recent (2013) *The Journey of Modern Theology: from Reconstruction to Deconstruction*.<sup>15</sup> Initially "a revision" of the Grenz et al. work, it eventually expanded to an impressive 700+ page work. Yet for all of Olson's revision, he does not revise his position on Baillie's critical thought: it is without a contribution to contemporary Christian thought. Similarly, Musser and Price note merely in their American publication

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<sup>9</sup> David F. Ford, ed., *The Modern Theologians: An Introduction to Christian theology in the Twentieth Century*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Oxford: Blackwell, 1997).

<sup>10</sup> Peter Sedgwick, "Theology and Society", pp. 287-288. In Ford, *Modern Theologians*.

<sup>11</sup> John Baillie's *Our Knowledge of God*, p. 143, as cited in Hubert Cunliffe-Jones, ed., *A History of Christian Doctrine* (paperback edition) (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1997), p. 468.

<sup>12</sup> Newlands, *Transatlantic Theology*.

<sup>13</sup> Stanley J. Grenz & Roger E. Olson, *20th Century Theology: God and the World in a Transitional Age* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1992).

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, note #15, p. 325.

<sup>15</sup> Roger E. Olson, *The Journey of Modern Theology: From Reconstruction to Deconstruction*. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2013.

*A New Handbook of Christian Theologians*<sup>16</sup> that Baillie helped persuade T.F. Torrance to take a position at Auburn Seminary.<sup>17</sup> This, however, is more than one will find in Livingston's 2006 *Modern Christian Thought: The Twentieth Century*. This American publication "covers the twentieth century and includes chapters on the important movements, theologians and writers of the century, including developments in the last years of the century."<sup>18</sup> A review of its 544 pages will disclose that it never even mentions John Baillie's name. Kapic and McCormack's more recent (2012) American publication, *Mapping Modern Theology: A Thematic and Historical Introduction*, follows suit: it notes, for example, the contributions of Barth, the brothers Niebuhr, and Baillie's student T.F. Torrance, though says nothing about John Baillie's modern theology.

Of course it is not as if historians of Christian thought have found nothing of value in Baillie's critical thought. Writing from Oxford University, Trevor Williams, for example, maintains that John Baillie (like Donald Baillie) "helped secure a middle ground for those open to Barthian influence but less inclined to abandon all the insights of the immanentist tradition".<sup>19</sup> A presumed accolade for Baillie's talent for mediating between theological extremes, it echoes Macquarrie's quite similar estimation of Baillie's theology, articulated some 15 years earlier: Baillie's theology, forged at a time which "so stressed God's transcendence that any sense of his presence in the world was almost lost", stands out as a "notable exception": its doctrine of God mediates between two "unfortunate" Protestant-theological "extremes" characteristic of Baillie's day—viz., the nineteenth-century's overemphasis on God's immanent presence and the early twentieth-century's overemphasis on God's transcendence.<sup>20</sup> That said, neither Williams nor Macquarrie maintain that Baillie's thought *per se* is of value to modern Christian thought. The same goes for the rather important *The Oxford Companion to Christian Thought*:<sup>21</sup>

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<sup>16</sup> Donald W. Musser & Joseph L. Price, ed., *A New Handbook of Christian Theologians* (Nashville, TN: Abingdon Press, 1996).

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 461.

<sup>18</sup> James C. Livingston, and Francis Schüssler Fiorenza. *Modern Christian thought: The Twentieth Century*, Vol. 2 (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2006), Preface.

<sup>19</sup> Trevor Williams, "Protestant Theology: Britain", p. 484. In Alister E. McGrath, ed., *Modern Christian Thought* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers Inc., 1993).

<sup>20</sup> John Macquarrie, *Principles of Christian Theology*, revised edition (London: SCM Press Ltd., 1977), p. 203; note #18, *ibid.*

<sup>21</sup> Adrian Hastings and Alistair Mason and Hugh Pyper, eds. *The Oxford Companion to Christian Thought*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000.

although it rightly provides entries for several of Baillie's contemporaries, it neither provides an entry for Baillie, let alone an argument for the contemporary relevance of Baillie's critical thought.

Baillie's theological corpus indicates that his was a career-long preoccupation with both the problems of revelation and knowledge of God.<sup>22</sup> Consequently, one would expect Baillie's thought to surface in the more specialized surveys that are concerned with the idea of revelation. One does. For example, Macdonald makes mention of Baillie's idea of revelation in his work *Ideas of Revelation*.<sup>23</sup> Therein, Macdonald claims that Baillie's idea of revelation "sharpened the divorce" between revelation and Biblical inspiration during the early twentieth century.<sup>24</sup> Nevertheless, Macdonald certainly does not take this as a gain for Christian thought; his own idea of revelation argues against the wisdom of such a divorce. Moreover, when Macdonald does make but passing reference to Baillie's idea of revelation, that reference is occasioned by, and incidental to, MacDonald's exposition of what he reckons to be more important twentieth century ideas of revelation, those of Barth and Brunner.<sup>25</sup> Instructive also is Avery Dulles's creative and instructive *Models of Revelation*.<sup>26</sup> Something of a minor classic in theological typology, when this veritable *tour de force* of models of revelation turns to Baillie's idea of revelation, it notes merely that Baillie's survey of the idea of revelation demonstrates "a remarkable breadth of agreement [among twentieth century theologians] that 'God reveals himself in action'".<sup>27</sup> By Dulles's estimation, then, Baillie was a capable historian of other theologians' ideas of revelation, albeit a theologian whose own idea of revelation is without value for contemporary Christian thought.

We find, then, a tendency amongst both historians of Christian thought in general, and historians concerned with the idea's of knowledge of God and revelation, to dismiss

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<sup>22</sup> Professor Macquarrie remarks in his *Twentieth Century Religious Thought* (p. 340): "In particular, the problem of revelation and of our knowledge of God continually exercised [Baillie's] mind..." Similarly, Professor Newlands identifies ground for knowledge of a personal God as a central concern in Baillie's critical thought. See George M. Newlands, "The Sense of the Presence of God", p. 155. In Fergusson, *Christ, Church and Society* (pp.155-169)

<sup>23</sup> H.D. McDonald, *Ideas of Revelation: An Historical Study: 1860-1960* (London: George Allen & Unwin Ltd., 1963).

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 173.

<sup>25</sup> See pp. 162-168 *passim* for other remarks.

<sup>26</sup> Avery Dulles, *Models of Revelation* (Dublin: Gill and Macmillan Ltd., 1992).

<sup>27</sup> Baillie, *The Idea of Revelation in Recent Thought* (pp. 49-50), cited in Dulles, p. 53.



the contemporary relevance or staying power of Baillie's mediating theology. This marginalization is not without warrant; it is amply backed by the leading Baillie scholarship's present estimation of the virtues of Baillie's mediating theology.

## 1.2. BAILLIE'S MEDIATING THEOLOGY: BAILLIE RESEARCHERS' EVALUATION OF ITS ENDURING VALUE

A review of over 50 years of scholarly criticism of Baillie's critical thought discloses a theme that continues to pervade the literature: John Baillie's critical thought is, as the opening quote has been found to suggest, dinosaurian: dead and unable to survive a now more demanding intellectual terrain, contemporary Christian thought.

The publication dates of the histories of Christian thought thus considered span roughly the past two decades. Concurrently, the past two decades have witnessed resurgence in research on John Baillie's life and thought. Research that has hailed typically from Scottish Universities,<sup>28</sup> it has afforded generally positive appraisals of its native son's mediating theology, as one would expect. Newlands, for example, has of late emphasized the positive impact of Baillie's mediating theology on transatlantic theological developments<sup>29</sup>: Baillie, one is told, was a mediating theologian with an uncanny talent for relating Christian thought to secular thought (and vice versa)—a superb “bridge builder” whose theological prowess is “needed by every theological age, our age included.”<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> E.g., George M. Newlands, *John and Donald Baillie: Transatlantic Theology*, Vol. 10, *Religions and Discourse*, James Francis (Ed.) (Oxford: Peter Lang, 2002); David A.S. Fergusson, *John and Donald Baillie: Selected Writings* (Edinburgh: Saint Andrews Press, 1997); David A.S Fergusson, ed., *Christ, Church and Society: Essays on John Baillie and Donald Baillie* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1993). Professor Fergusson's works were published while he was at Aberdeen. In Fergusson's *Christ, Church and Society*, all of the essays focused primarily on John Baillie's life and thought issue from thinkers each of whom has been affiliated with, or is affiliated with, Scottish universities. This includes: Alec C. Cheyne, Professor of Ecclesiastical History in Edinburgh (1964-86); David A.S. Fergusson, then Professor of Systematic Theology in the University of Aberdeen (1990-99), now at New College, Edinburgh; Duncan B. Forrester, then Professor of Christian Ethics and Practical Theology, University of Edinburgh; now Professor Emeritus; George S. Hendry, former parish minister in Bridge of Allan (1930-49), and Charles Hodge Professor of Systematic Theology at Princeton Theological Seminary (1949-73); John C. Lusk, a minister in the Church of Scotland; George Newlands, then Professor of Divinity in the University of Glasgow; T.F. Torrance, Professor of Christian Dogmatics in the University of Edinburgh (1952-79); and James A. Whyte, Professor of Practical Theology and Christian Ethics in the University of St. Andrews (1958-87). As indicated in the preface of Fergusson, *Christ, Church and Society*, 1993.

<sup>29</sup> As amply demonstrated in George M. Newlands, *John and Donald Baillie: Transatlantic Theology*, Vol. 10. In *Religions and Discourse*, ed. James Francis. Oxford: Peter Lang, 2002.

<sup>30</sup> Newlands, *Transatlantic Theology*, p. 297.

And yet it is not without irony that research from Scottish academic quarters collectively provide plausibly the most compelling argument for the inability of Baillie's critical thought to thrive beyond its "theological age, our age included"; for we find Scottish theologian's overall evaluations of Baillie's mediating theology tending to marginalize the staying power of Baillie's critical thought. Specifically, while these global evaluations typically do commend Baillie for his theological method, powers of observation and writing style, they are yet routinely tight-lipped about the enduring value of Baillie's theological content *per se*. Here, it will prove helpful to divulge the pattern to which overall evaluations of Baillie's life and thought have tended to conform for over 50 years. The pattern of evaluation tends to emphasize the following virtues.

#### The Often-Identified Virtues of Baillie's Mediating Theology ("V")

- (V1) Its harmonious marriage of critical theology and the Christian faith;
- (V2) Its astute observation and judicious evaluation of other thinker's thoughts;
- (V3) Its style;
- (V4) Its mediating theological method;

Combinations of (V1-4) also come with

- (V5) The absence of an argument that Baillie's mediating theology produced a doctrine or concept of value to contemporary Christian thought.

We begin with John Mackay's "John Baillie, A Lyrical Tribute and Appraisal".<sup>31</sup> In this memoriam, Mackay identifies Baillie as the "leading mediational theologian of [his] time" and proceeds to what, in written form, constitutes the next section of Mackay's essay, "The Theologian". Here, Mackay identifies the mediational theologian's virtues: "Few writers can match him [Baillie] in doing critical justice to the thought of others. His capacity to relate theological ideas to realities of the secular order is

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<sup>31</sup> John A. Mackay, "John Baillie, A Lyrical Tribute and Appraisal", *Scottish Journal of Theology*, Vol. 9, 1956, pp. 225-35.

particularly impressive."<sup>32</sup> This gives way to Mackay's global assessment of Baillie's life and thought. Did Baillie's meditational theology provide a particularly impressive theological concept? Apparently it did not; for what ensues is an emphasis on the stylistic and formal qualities of Baillie's critical thought: "To a greater extent than any professional theologian of our time John Baillie's work combined the finest scholarship with a deep devotional spirit..."<sup>33</sup>

Although Mackay's academic-theological career was distinguished primarily on transatlantic shores,<sup>34</sup> Mackay, Baillie's fellow Scot, Invernessian and lifelong friend, advances an evaluation of Baillie's thought, in *The Scottish Journal of Theology*, the contours of which will be repeatedly emphasized by Scottish university-affiliated theologians' estimations of Baillie's theological virtues. As such, it repays study.

#### Mackay's Assessment of Baillie's Meditational Theology's Merits ("M")

(M1) Its marriage of a "deeply devotional spirit" with "finest scholarship"; [Cf. V1, V3]

(M2) Its judicious treatment of ("critical justice to") other thinkers' thoughts; [Cf. V2]

(M3) Its "particularly impressive" relating of "theological ideas" to "the secular order".

(Cf. V4) These (M1-M3) contributed to John Baillie's being

(M4) "[T]he leading meditational theologian of his time". (Cf. V4)

Mackay's assessment of Baillie's theological merits is also

(M5) Without an argument that Baillie's mediating theology produced a doctrine or concept of value to contemporary Christian thought.<sup>35</sup> (Cf. V5)

Implicit, then, in Mackay's evaluation is that Baillie's mediating theology is dead (M5).

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<sup>32</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 229-30.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 227.

<sup>34</sup> President and Professor of Ecumenics, Princeton Theological Seminary, 1936-1959.

<sup>35</sup> Of course, one would hardly expect an argument from Mackay in a memorial! Still, the occasion would have easily afforded Mackay the opportunity to make at least the claim that Baillie's thought produced a particularly fruitful concept or doctrine for contemporary Christian thought.

Fergusson provides a more recent, and substantially more penetrating, analysis of Baillie's critical thought in his important "John Baillie: Orthodox Liberal".<sup>36</sup> The present concern is with its conclusions. To put them in context, Fergusson, having thus laid bare the contours of the development of Baillie's critical thought, restates the main point developed in his essay: Baillie's childhood rearing in orthodox Calvinism, and subsequently increased theological openness to modernity's theological criticism, shaped Baillie's theological method—one carried out in a typically "orthodox-liberal" manner. The "theological virtues" of Baillie's mediating theology are subsequently identified:

Fergusson's Assessment of Baillie's Theological Virtues ("F")

(F1) Baillie's "orthodox-liberal" theology is a ". . . creative blend of Christian piety and intellectual honesty..."

(F2) Baillie's "strategy of mediation was not an easy and comfortable compromise between opposites."

(F3) Baillie's apologetic style "was unfailingly irenic, [though] he never sought a false peace with rival opinions."

(F4) Baillie's theology is always "illuminating and instructive" on the issue of "the way in which Christian witness to the uniqueness of the person and work of Christ can be set alongside the disclosure and activity of God amongst other religions and traditions..."

(F5) Baillie's theology has a "harmony and style". "A spirituality pervades Baillie's philosophical, dogmatic, apologetic, and devotional writings and this is reflected in his calm and elegant prose style."

Here, then, are the mediating theologian's "highest achievements".<sup>37</sup> What is one to make of them? For one, it is readily apparent that Fergusson's evaluation of Baillie's mediating theology is not unlike Mackay's evaluation (M):

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<sup>36</sup> David A. Fergusson, "John Baillie: Orthodox Liberal". In Fergusson, ed., *Christ, Church and Society*, pp. 123-153.

<sup>37</sup> "Orthodox Liberal", p. 152.

Mackay and Fergusson's Assessments of the Virtues of Baillie's Mediating Theology:  
Points of Agreement ("MF")

- (MF1) Its positive spiritual quality (Cf. F1, F5 and M1 as:  $\cong$  V1);
- (MF2) Its judicious assessment of other thinker's thoughts (Cf. F1 - F3 and M2 as:  $\cong$  V2)
- (MF3) Its stylistic quality. Fergusson lays more emphasis on the stylistic elements of Baillie's critical thought. (Cf. F3, V2)
- (MF4) Its method's ability to relate Christian thought to non-Christian thought. "(Cf. M3 and F4 as:  $\cong$  V4 ).

Likewise, Fergusson's identification of Baillie's "highest achievements":

- (MF5) Is without an argument that Baillie's mediating theology produced a doctrine or concept of value for contemporary Christian thought. (Cf. M1–M4; cf. F1-F5 as:  $\cong$  V5)

Of the above conclusions, (F4) and (F5) require further consideration, as they could suggest that Fergusson finds life in Baillie's critical thought—a promising doctrine or concept for contemporary Christian thought. For example, (F4) does suggest that Baillie's thought provides a promising idea of revelation—one perhaps able to reconcile the Christian idea of knowledge of God in Jesus Christ with other religions' ideas of divine action, in particular. Fergusson's criticism of Baillie's thought, indicated elsewhere in the essay, appear to nullify, however, the possibility that Baillie's idea of revelation is promising in those respects:

There still remains an unresolved tension in Baillie's theology which suggests a failure to think through a theological epistemology consistent with the position he holds. Is our knowledge of God derived primarily from the revelation attested to in Scripture and proclaimed by the Church or is it derived primarily from the moral sense which is common to all religions and traditions? If both are related to [sic] admitted as sources of theological

knowledge, how are they to be related and integrated? Although we can discern hints of a possible reconciliation in his last work, these questions are not dealt with at any point in Baillie's corpus, and this may be the outstanding weakness in his theology.<sup>38</sup>

If, then, Fergusson is correct—Baillie's idea of revelation fails to integrate special revelation (Christian knowledge of God) with general revelation (a moral sense of God indigenous to persons of all religions and traditions)—I should think Baillie's mediating theology rather ill equipped to be (F4) "illuminating and instructive" on "the way in which Christian witness to the uniqueness of the person and work of Christ can be set alongside the disclosure and activity of God amongst other religions and traditions..." This is because a cogent elucidation of revelation's integration across religions would demand at least the following: (1) a lucid (and persuasive) description of how knowledge of God is mediated across religious traditions; (2) a conceptually clear demarcation of specifically Christian revelatory content from non-Christian revelatory content—i.e., an elucidation of what is qualitatively distinct in God's revelation in and to each religion. This (1-2), however, is exactly what Baillie's idea of revelation fails to provide, according to Fergusson. For one, Baillie's idea of revelation fails to identify the primary locus for the mediation of a specifically Christian revelation: "Is our knowledge of God derived primarily from the revelation attested to in Scripture and proclaimed by the Church or is it derived primarily from the moral sense which is common to all religions and traditions?"<sup>39</sup> Not only does Baillie's elucidation of divine revelation suffer from apparent internal logical difficulties when it describes Christian knowledge of God *per se*; it fails to differentiate a specifically Christian locus of revelation from that for knowledge of God in general: Baillie's is a problematic elucidation of how a universal moral sense mediates a general knowledge of God, Fergusson maintains. If, then, Baillie's idea of revelation is illuminating and instructive on Christian revelation's relationship to a universal revelation, such a theological virtue would appear to as an

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<sup>38</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 146.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 146.

object lesson of sorts—a testimony, for example, to the pitfalls of a Christian theology inclined to couch religious belief in a universal moral sense of God’s presence.<sup>40</sup> Indeed, at least one point<sup>41</sup> in Baillie’s theological development, Baillie himself does appear inclined to reject the possibility of (1-2)—that is, the conceptual integration of multiple religious experiences with multiple revelations which might afford positively enlightening instruction on the issue of revelation. Perhaps this is what Fergusson has in mind, when he admits that Baillie's illuminating and instructive epistemology fails to resolve certain revelation-related "questions [that] are not dealt with at any point in Baillie’s corpus” to Fergusson's own satisfaction? Regardless, there is scant evidence to suggest that Fergusson thinks Baillie's idea of revelation a positive gain for Christian thought. Consequently, this global evaluation of Baillie’s critical thought tacitly asserts the popular position (V5): Baillie’s mediating theology is dead: it without a doctrine or concept of positive value for contemporary Christian thought.

Newlands, writing in Fergusson's excellent collection of essays, also weighs in on Baillie's mediating-theological virtues. His first assessment of John's (and Donald's) theological legacy (“N1”) arrives in the context of an elucidation and appraisal of Baillie’s most mature thought, Baillie’s posthumously published Gifford Lectures, *The Sense of the Presence of God* (1962). Newlands states:

I refer to the eirenic quality which characterises much of the Baillie brothers’ work, and which enabled them to draw inspiration from many sources, from the theological right and from the theological left, from different philosophical traditions and devotional traditions, from different cultures... [T]hey displayed a rare and remarkable freedom to choose and to communicate with different perspectives. This is not the least of the legacies of John Baillie...<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>40</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 135.

<sup>41</sup> "To stop short anywhere within the religious experience of our race [when distinguishing Christian revelation from non-Christian revelation] is to express a purely arbitrary preference and to draw a line for ourselves where no line exists." See *IOR*, p. 62.

<sup>42</sup> Newlands, "The Sense of the Presence of God", p. 165.

Elsewhere in the essay, Newlands augments his estimation of John's legacy with the remark that Baillie was “one of the most perceptive and judicious of twentieth century theologians”<sup>43</sup>.

Taken as a whole, then, Newlands’s evaluation can be summarized as follows.

Newlands's First Assessment of the Chief Merits of Baillie's Mediating Theology (“N1”)

(N1) Its astute observation and judicious evaluation of other perspectives (Cf. V2)

(N2) Its stylistic quality—its irenic style, in particular (Cf. V3)

(N3) Its mediating theological method draws from and effectively dialogues with different positions (Cf. V4)

In addition, Newlands’s appraisal of Baillie’s legacy is one

(N4) Without an argument that Baillie's mediating theology produced a concept of enduring value for contemporary Christian thought. (Cf. V5)

We observe, then, that overall evaluation N1 conforms to overall evaluation V, the exception being that it does not advance the merits indicated in proposition (V1):

Baillie’s harmonious infusion of devotional and critical thought.

Newlands’s superb *John and Donald Baillie: Transatlantic Theology*<sup>44</sup> provides the definitive research on John Baillie's life and thought to-date. Authoritative work that

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<sup>43</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 155.

<sup>44</sup> George M. Newlands, *John and Donald Baillie: Transatlantic Theology*, Vol. 10, in *Religions and Discourse*, James Francis, ed. Oxford: Peter Lang, 2002. A work whose aim is to elucidate language and culture’s collective effect on western Christian theology both immediately before and after World War II, it effectively realizes its aim as within the broader context of an elucidation and analysis of major historical, sociological and cultural developments of the first half of the twentieth century. This gives way to a diachronic and conceptual elucidation of the social context in which John and Donald Baillie developed their own, particular “transatlantic” theologies. Here, the “Baillie Papers”—an expansive number of papers (diaries, letters, and papers penned by the Baillie’s) hitherto unavailable to mainline research—prove rather insightful for understanding the historical development of the Baillie brothers' theologies. For example, these papers provide substantial insight into the Baillies’ transatlantic activities, their well-documented collective influence on the theology of their day, included. John, for instance, is found to have been instrumental in the shaping of the American, Scottish and ecumenical theological scene from roughly 1930-1960. The "Baillie Papers" also provide Newlands insight into the theoretical construction of a new critical liberal theology.



it is, it effectively evidences the tendency of Baillie scholarship to marginalize the contemporary theological relevance of Baillie's mediating theological content *per se*. This marginalization is evidenced in Newlands's overall evaluation of John Baillie's mediating theology, located in Chapter 8: "Faith, Theology, and Culture—An Assessment". Here, the major research findings are consolidated and ordered in six subsections. Given the work's importance, I shall explicate at length its research findings and accompanying conclusions.

(Introduction) The "book does not have a conclusion"—that is, an all-encompassing conclusion about the Baillies' thought. Yet conclusions are drawn: "Theology needs its prophetic protesting figures like Kierkegaard and Barth. But it also needs people like the Baillie's, to discern connections, to build bridges between different styles of theology, between theology and culture . . ." A six-fold organizational scheme for elucidating how the Baillie's can "help us in the task of relating theology to church and society, faith to culture in the present" ensues.

(1) "Developing Engagement with the Baillie's". This review of "the most significant findings" from essays in Fergusson's *Christ, Church and Society* introduces a point of disagreement in the literature: Fergusson maintains that Baillie's latter critical thought was more creative than his early thought; Newlands thinks "Baillie's theology is creative in different ways at different times."

(2) "Christian Faith and Culture". "In assessing further here . . . the impact of the Baillie's life and work, we shall seek to bear in mind the changing cultures in which they were working." Cultural changes shaped and facilitated Baillie's theological impact on American and Scottish culture: "John had real influence, though it should not be overestimated, on Presbyterian thought between about 1930 and 1960." That influence faded in the late 1950's, in lieu of cultural and intellectual changes. Accordingly, John's Gifford Lectures (1962) spoke only "to John's established readers. Others were now into new territory in philosophy and theology—notably linguistic philosophy and Barth respectively—and last year's fashion seems the most dated of all."

(3) “The American Dimension”. Baillie’s Scottish evangelical-theological heritage was well received by the early, twentieth century American theological scene. One reason for its reception was its ability to combine strengths from evangelical liberalism with lessons learned from the Barthian school. This helped Baillie and others (Reinhold Niebuhr, Van Dusen, and Sloan Coffin) construct an independent theological position which would play a central role in world ecumenical movements from 1930 to 1950.

Newlands subsequently identifies the strengths of Baillie’s critical thought:

(4) “Text in Context”. Baillie’s exposure to transatlantic culture broadened Baillie’s theological perspective. This broadening, in turn, helped facilitate the development of strengths in Baillie’s mediating theology (“N2”):

(N2:1) Balance. “John was not inclined to jump into espousing a particular viewpoint without qualification... But he was always concerned to see particular movements in their particular context, to be appreciated and learned from but not to be followed slavishly. He succeeded in creating a balance which was a considerable strength.”

(N2:2) Method. Baillie’s theological method is “one particular model which was particularly effective in producing constructive theology while maintaining a critical dialogue between theology and culture at the same time.”

In which direction did Baillie’s balanced theological method lean? Was it preoccupied with the systematic articulation of timeless theological truths; or was it primarily concerned to respond theologically to intellectual currents prominent during Baillie’s day? “John Baillie’s work does not read like a timeless *Summa*. Indeed it could not, because it quite deliberately addresses current intellectual issues with a sympathetic sensitivity to their own agenda.”

(N2:3) Particularity. In keeping with its “sympathetic sensitivity” toward intellectual currents, Baillie’s critical thought’s “effectiveness depends on its particularity.”

“Yet its methodology, of careful dissection of all the relevant concepts, has a classic quality which makes it a model of its own kind.”

What, then, is the present-day value of Baillie’s mediating theology? They are its:

(N2:4) Methodological value. Baillie’s liberal Christian method demonstrates potential as an intercultural hermeneutic, despite its claims to experiences which transcend nature.

(N2:5) Epistemological potential. Baillie’s idea of immediacy may have potential for Reformed epistemological debate over the issue of non-inferential modes of knowing.

(5) “Personal Impact”. One of Baillie’s former students (David H. C. Read) speaks to Baillie’s pedagogical prowess in America. Baillie was well respected, and thought ‘very human and very funny’. Baillie was able to relax in America—generally not the case when he lived in Scotland. The section closes with remarks about Donald.

(6) “Beyond the Frontiers of Liberal Theology”. The critical theological legacy of John and Donald’s thought is now cast into bold relief: John and Donald’s thought are “dinosaurs”: well adapted to their (intellectual-cultural) milieu, it died with changes in (intellectual-cultural) climate. Newlands then entertains the possibility of resurrecting the Baillies' thought:

Is it then possible to distill an essence of their work, from whose elements new theological programmes can somehow be cloned . . .? Clearly not . . . [However] we can still consider the possible legacy of the Baillie’s for theology.

What, then, is the “possible legacy of the Baillie’s” thought? Newlands's global evaluation of that legacy centers primarily on their mediating theological method:

Newlands’s Estimation of the Possible Legacy of the Baillie’s (“N2”)

(N2:6:1) John (and Donald) provides an example of an “evangelical liberal approach to theology [which] sought to combine critical openness to modern scholarship at all levels with commitment to Christian faith.”

(N2:6:2) John shows us that “the basic problem with liberal theology was its illusion to finality.”

(N2:6:3) John (and Donald) demonstrates that “an evangelical liberal theology would also have to learn from the catholic dimensions of Christianity . . .”

(N2:6:4) John (and Donald) makes it clear that “above all, a new critical liberal theology has to be confident in developing its own response to the divine transcendence.”

(N2:6:5) The Baillie's also teach us that “a theology of transformative Christian practice will shed new light on the mystery of faith, changing the contours of the landscape to produce surprise and devotion.”

(N2:6:6) The Baillies’ liberal evangelical theological method demonstrate “that such an enterprise is part of a well-established tradition whose theological credentials are at least as solid as any other candidates in the theological tradition, and whose potential for deployment in a theology of the future is still immense.”<sup>45</sup>

Here, then, is an overall evaluation from the definitive work on Baillie’s life and thought.

We observe that Newlands's second overall evaluation of Baillie's thought (hence, "N2") is a substantially more nuanced account than the earlier and necessarily briefer N1: Baillie’s strengths and potential legacy are indicated across six subsections (N2:1-N2:6). We also find that N2’s conclusions (sections four and six) are consistent with N1—i.e.,

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<sup>45</sup> *Transatlantic Theology*, Chap. 8, pp. 297–319, *passim*.

consistent with MF—i.e., consistent with M and F—i.e., consistent with V. That N2 does largely reiterate those emphases of V is apparent when we recall V, which has been found to be identical with M, and square it with N2’s salient findings.

Baillie’s Theological Virtues: From Mackay (1956) to Newlands (2002):

Points of Agreement (“VN2”)

(V1) Its harmonious marriage of critical theology and the Christian faith (Cf. N2:6:1)

(V2) Its astute elucidation and judicious evaluation of thinkers’ thoughts (Cf. N2:1)

(V3) Its style (downplayed in this work’s overall evaluation)

(V4) Its mediating theological method (Cf. N2:1-4; N2: 6 *passim*)

This combination (V1-4) comes

(V5) Without an argument that Baillie’s mediating theology produced a concept of enduring value for contemporary Christian thought

It should be noted that Newlands, writing nearly fifty years after Mackay, does deviate from position (V). For one, there is no explicit contention in N2 for Baillie’s excellent style of writing (cf. N). Secondly, N2 suggests that Baillie’s mediating theological legacy could provide a paradigm or template for the construction of a new critical liberal “theology of the future”. This is a new spin in the literature, to my knowledge. It is an estimation of the enduring value of Baillie’s *method* to which I shall return in the final chapter of the thesis. Thirdly, (N2: 5) does suggest that Baillie’s mediating-theological *content*—which is to say, neither merely his literary style nor his mediating theological method—holds promise for contemporary Christian thought. Specifically, it is suggested that Baillie’s idea of immediacy holds potential for reformed epistemological debate over the issue of non-inferential modes of knowing. It is a suggestion interesting even more, as Baillie’s concept of mediated immediacy presupposes the idea of immediate knowledge of God suggested to be of possible contemporary-theological value.

Does Baillie's own idea of immediacy hold promise as a contribution to contemporary Christian thought? Although Newlands does not argue that it does, when his historical-epistemological observation suggests such promise, it does so with recourse to Power's thought<sup>46</sup> as ground. There is, however, nothing in Power's not-so-novel observation<sup>47</sup> that Baillie's idea of immediacy anticipates the reformed epistemological emphasis on non-inferential or immediate knowledge of God, those of Alston and Plantinga included, to suggest that Power is persuaded that Baillie's own idea of immediacy could survive, let alone impact, those epistemological advances that have ensued since Baillie's death. Surely, Newlands is aware of this. Consequently, we must conclude that N2 advances proposition (V5)—this rather in keeping with his position that Baillie's critical content is, by contemporary apologetic standards, dinosaurian.

The relatively recent research on John Baillie has provided us considerable insight into Baillie's life and thought. I am hardly taking odds with the *explicit* propositions advanced in its overall evaluations of Baillie's critical thought. For instance, it appears incontrovertible that Baillie's corpus is replete with astute observations. In addition, it seems reasonable to think that the mediating theologian was a generally a faithful observer and even-handed critic of other thinkers' thought, if it is assuredly the case that not all research specialists (for instance, experts on the thought of Barth, James, Kant, Schleiermacher) would agree with all of Baillie's appraisals of multifarious thinkers' thoughts.<sup>48</sup> Axiomatic also, I think, is that Baillie's legacy includes his production of powerful devotional material. Perhaps T.F. Torrance puts it best, when he praises Baillie's elegant fusion of critical thought with devotional-oriented material:

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<sup>46</sup> Power (1994), as Newlands notes, has examined mediated immediacy's possible impact on reformed epistemology. Power does not contend that the concept holds promise for contemporary Christian thought, its idea of immediacy, included. See William L. Power, "Our Knowledge of God", *Perspectives in Religious Studies*, 21, 1994, pp. 231-43.

<sup>47</sup> Hoitenga similarly observes in his earlier work that "Baillie is a good example of the typically Reformed effort to avoid natural theology in the interest of defending the priority of a non-inferential way of knowing from our experience of the world." Dewey J. Hoitenga, Jr., *Faith and Reason from Plato to Plantinga: An Introduction to Reformed Epistemology*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1991, p. 157.

<sup>48</sup> For example, not only was Baillie unfamiliar with Barth's final and uncomplete thought in *Church Dogmatics*, according to Fergusson: "It is not clear that Baillie had read much beyond *Church Dogmatics* I/3." "Orthodox Liberal", note 70, p. 151.

In no theologian of our time has the contemplation of God been so wedded to a beauty of form deriving from rational worship. It flowed over into his appreciation of all lovely creatures and of the works of God's children, whether in music or drawing or porcelain or verse; but is most manifest in the form of his thoughts and the corresponding form of his writing. We have rarely known such theological prose as flowed from the pen of John Baillie—even his writing was a worshipping and honouring of God in the beauty of holiness.<sup>49</sup>

Surely, a work like Baillie's *A Diary of Private Prayer*<sup>50</sup> readily attests to Baillie's eloquence as a writer of devotional material. Likewise, the chapters of Baillie's own life exemplified a harmonious, if not always easily reconcilable, marriage between an academic theologian's critical contemplation of Christian *doxa* and a Christian believer's devout walk of Christian *praxis*.<sup>51</sup>

Still, if both historians of Christian thought and the leading Baillie research are correct, Baillie failed, for all his acumen, to pen a theological concept of enduring value for Christian thought.<sup>52</sup> This present marginalization of the enduring value of Baillie's critical thought, includes, we have found, no shortage of scholars on each side of the

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<sup>49</sup> Thomas F. Torrance, "John Baillie at Prayer." In Fergusson, *Christ Church and Society* (pp. 253-261), p. 257.

<sup>50</sup> John Baillie, *A Diary of Private Prayer*. London: Oxford University Press, 1936.

<sup>51</sup> See Thomas F. Torrance, "A living Sacrifice: In Memoriam, John Baillie, 1886-1960", *Religion in Life*, Vol. 30, No. 3 (summer, 1961), pp. 329-333.

<sup>52</sup> In this context, we could find additional support in the thought of the late A.C. Cheyne. The former Professor of Ecclesiastical History (1964-1986) and Principal at New College, Edinburgh (where he taught from 1958-1986) indicates in Chapter 10 ("John and Donald Baillie: A Biographical Introduction") of his *Studies in Scottish Church History*: "In what follows an attempt will be made to assess the Baillies' theological achievement..." (p. 201). Having lucidly dealt with the Baillies' spiritual and intellectual inheritance, Cheyne identifies "their distinctive contribution" in a section by the same name. A review of the three areas in which the Baillies made contributions distinct ("Apologetic Concern", "Sensitivity in the treatment of doubt and unbelief", "Resistance to the Barthian onslaught") will also indicate an assessment absent of the claim that John Baillie's thought has a concept of value for contemporary Christian thought. Noteworthy also, is that Cheyne's identification of Baillie's "theological achievements" does not conform to the commonplace pattern for evaluations of Baillie's theology. See A.C. Cheyne, *Studies in Scottish Church History*, pp. 199-236 (esp., pp. 218 ff). Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999. In addition, I find it interesting that when Cheyne introduces this essay in Fergusson's earlier *Christ, Church and Society* (1993), Cheyne uses the phrase "the significance of the Baillie's theology" and not the more decisive "the Baillie's theological achievement" when discussing his evaluatory aim for the latter work. Had Cheyne become more certain that these were ultimately John Baillie's distinct contributions to Christian thought?

Atlantic. Consider, for example, “John Baillie: A Mediating Theologian”,<sup>53</sup> written by the American Power: a work published by the Union Theological Seminary at which Baillie once taught; a work poised to identify the virtues of Baillie’s mediating theology; a work with no shortage of space (20+ pages) to do so; it is a work without an argument that the transatlantic “mediating theologian” produced a concept of value for contemporary Christian thought. This reticence applies to Power’s appraisal of Baillie’s concept of mediated immediacy, which is discussed in that article. In due course, this thesis will challenge the tacit and widespread claims that neither the mediating theologian’s concept of mediated immediacy (hereafter, MI) in particular, nor his mediating theology in general, afford contemporary Christian thought a promising concept.

### 1.3. THE MYSTERY OF MI’S MEANING

It is not for 75 years of ignorance of MI that academic theology's has rejected MI as a promising concept for Christian thought. McEnhill and Newlands, for example, rightly observe in their *Fifty Key Christian Thinkers*<sup>54</sup> that MI is “the idea with which he [Baillie] is most associated”.<sup>55</sup> Rather, that marginalization would appear to be underwritten primarily by scholarly criticism of MI's epistemology, the overwhelming tendency here being to assert that MI's meaning and logic are convoluted (see below).

Although MI’s meaning is itself presently a major research issue, we can get some sense of what Baillie means by knowledge of God as MI. Baillie states that

This is what I have tried to express in the conception of a mediated immediacy. In Christ we know God not by argument but by personal acquaintance. In Christ God comes to us directly.<sup>56</sup>

Elsewhere in *Our Knowledge of God*, Baillie elaborates on how such direct or

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<sup>53</sup> William L. Power. "John Baillie: A Mediating Theologian", *Union Theological Seminary Quarterly Review*, 25, 1968, pp. 47-68.

<sup>54</sup> *Fifty Key Christian Thinkers*, P. McEnhill and G. M. Newlands (eds), London: Routledge, 2004.

<sup>55</sup> “John and Donald Baillie”, pp. 48-58, in *ibid.*, p. 51.

<sup>56</sup> *OKG*, pp. 196-197.



immediate Christian knowledge of God is, paradoxically, mediated knowledge:

[N]o one of the four subjects of our knowledge—ourselves, our fellows, the corporeal world, and God—is ever presented to us except in conjunction with all three of the others . . . .

The service of others, the fellowship with others, and the historical tradition in which I stand are all media that leads me to the Mediator, and the Mediator leads me to God.

. . . . Clearly, then, the immediacy of God's presence to our soul is a mediated immediacy.<sup>57</sup>

### 1.3.1. MI: Separates Faith from Knowledge? No Personal Encounter With Christ?

Despite Baillie's straightforward description of the contours of MI's logic, MI's meaning persists as a matter of scholarly debate. The present division is readily evidenced in manifold competing interpretations about MI's logic and its epistemic status. There is, for example, the issue of MI's understanding of the epistemological relationship between faith and knowledge. Does MI's logic separate faith from knowledge or does it contend for an organic epistemological connection between faith and knowledge? D.W. Torrance insists that "immediated immediacy" (sic) evidences Baillie's "liberal" "separation of faith and knowledge" and also evidences that Baillie never "theologically . . . really understood the real significance of faith as knowledge, or personal encounter with God in Jesus Christ".<sup>58</sup> The neo-orthodox theologian is hardly alone in his contention that MI separates faith from knowledge; there is a long history of similar claims in the literature. The Christian evangelical thinker Carl Henry, for example, expresses epistemic disdain for Baillie's idea of immediacy in his *God, Revelation and Authority*,<sup>59</sup> his position being that Baillie's idea of immediacy marginalizes the cognitive content of revelation to the extent that it endorses logical agnosticism:

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 178-181 *passim*.

<sup>58</sup> David W. Torrance, a review of Fergusson's *Christ Church and Society*, in "The Evangelical Quarterly", Vol. 68, No. 1, January, 1996, p. 87.

<sup>59</sup> Carl Henry, *God, Revelation and Authority*, Waco, TX: Word Book Publishers, 1979.

What Barth and those he influences [Baillie] fail to emphasize . . . is that God's ways include the gift of our mental equipment that divine revelation addresses. The theology of revelation includes epistemic access to objective reality wherein the Logos in self-disclosure and self-interpretation manifests a Truth to be acknowledged and a Word to be heard.<sup>60</sup>

Indeed, such a denial of “epistemic access” to “objective reality” is, for want of emphasis on the propositional content of revelation, Baillie's "denial that revelation is a mental act” altogether.<sup>61</sup>

One can go back further still, to find D.C. Macintosh maintaining, not unlike Torrance and Henry, that a logically self-contradictory MI breaks the epistemological connection between faith and reason. Writing in 1940, the empirical theologian maintains with Torrance and Henry that the logic of Baillie's idea of immediacy compromises the logic of Baillie's related doctrines. Specifically, Macintosh claims that MI's logic: (1) undermines Baillie's *analogia entis*—the ontological connection between God and unregenerate human minds which makes knowledge of God possible—a shortcoming which, in turn, compromises Baillie's doctrine of the knowledge; (2) evidences that “in Baillie's case, it is the voice which is the voice of an epistemological monist, while the hands seem to be those of the dualist;” (3) demonstrates that Baillie's thought in *Our Knowledge of God* (3) is “unduly dogmatic; because at the bottom of his mind Baillie is still essentially dualistic and logically agnostic”.<sup>62</sup>

Macintosh's ground for claims (1-3) presupposes the validity of his criticism of MI's normative epistemology,<sup>63</sup> MI's reliance on an analogy between knowledge of human minds and knowledge of God, in particular. Macintosh's chief contention is MI's description of how God and the human mind are analogous is self-contradictory. As

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<sup>60</sup> *Ibid*: Chap. II, Vol. III, p. 171.

<sup>61</sup> Henry cites Baillie for support: ‘God does not give us information by communication. He gives us Himself in communion. It is not information about God that is revealed but . . . God Himself. John Baillie, *Idea of Revelation in Recent Thought*, p. 29. Cited in *God, Revelation and Authority*, p. 465.

<sup>62</sup> D.C. Macintosh, *The Problem of Religious Knowledge* (New York: Harper and Brothers Publications, 1940), p. 183ff.

<sup>63</sup> Details provided in Chapter 6.

support, Macintosh maintains that discursive (mediated) knowledge about the corporeal world is logically irreconcilable with non-propositional (immediate) knowledge of God and other minds: such supposedly "immediate" knowledge logically entails discursive (mediated) knowledge about the object claimed to be known immediately—namely, knowledge that it is God (or a human mind) who is being (supposedly) immediately known. In short, if discursive knowledge in one's brain about or of an object (God or a human mind) negates the logical possibility of proposition-free knowledge of that object—i.e., immediate knowledge of that object.

While this may be so, it is worthwhile to note that Macintosh also backs his various claims with his self-admitted confusion about MI's meaning: does MI's logic describe a "confrontation of the soul with the divine reality . . . a strong feeling of the reality of an unperceived presence, or on the other hand, a perceptual intuition, verifying and making objective our knowledge of the reality of the divine."<sup>64</sup> To claim that one knows MI's logic to be self-contradictory, however, is to assert tacitly that one knows what that logic entails—i.e., that one knows what Baillie means by knowledge of God as MI. This tacit assertion applies by logical extension to the claim that MI's logic undermines the credibility of epistemologically related concepts. While Macintosh may possess knowledge of what MI means, he assuredly fails demonstrate it. Rather, he concedes confusion about a most fundamental aspect of MI's description of knowledge of God—its mode for the apprehension of knowledge of God (Is it a feeling or an intuition?). Secondly, he admits confusion about MI's logic concerning the verification of knowledge of God. In short, Macintosh's warrant appears to be this: if he is confused about a concept's logic, that concept must be illogical.

T.F. Torrance offers a more recent, and apparently different, take on the issue of the separation of faith and knowledge by Baillie's epistemology of immediacy. For one, he maintains that Baillie's idea of immediacy does presuppose knowledge of an objectively existing God. Secondly, he maintains that Baillie's idea of immediacy (also unlike Schleiermacher's *anschauung*) does not reduce knowledge of God to "subjective states" "explained from the human end." Thirdly, Torrance interprets Baillie's thought on the immediacy of knowledge of God as contending for propositional content-carrying

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<sup>64</sup> *The Problem of Religious Knowledge*, p. 182.

knowledge. This comes out in Torrance's somewhat different criticism of the idea of immediacy presupposed by MI:

I cannot agree with John Baillie's position that the 'propositional' element is derivative, and comes only in a second-order reflection upon faith for it arises out of the immediate conceptual content [emphasis mine] of our intuitive knowledge of God.<sup>65</sup>

Thus, while these Torrance's agree that Baillie's idea of immediacy is a problematic description of faith's assent to Christian belief, T.F. Torrance does not appear inclined to read Baillie as a logical agnostic who separates faith from knowledge. The same applies to Klinefelter, who apparently finds no problems at all with Baillie's logic of MI. Indeed, according to Klinefelter, the immediacy of knowledge of God supposed by MI's logic does articulate rather cogently Christian faith's very nature:

John Baillie saw more clearly than many of his Neo-orthodox contemporaries the nature of and need for a careful and complete reassessment of the epistemological credentials of religious assertions in the light of our radically changing theological, philosophical, and cultural situation. If he has fallen short, it is not for lack of understanding the peculiar logic of faith, but for the apparent lack of any twentieth century logic adequate to understand the connections between religious and non-religious cognitive claims, or between faith and secular culture generally. Only in the very recent past has the work of men like Dunne, Köestler, Lonergan, Merleau-Ponty, Ricouer, Polanyi, and Torrance begun to be appreciated as a full-blown attempt to explicate that experience of cognitive insight into the nature of the reality that Baillie tried to articulate in more traditional theological language throughout his long and distinguished career [emphases mine].<sup>66</sup>

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<sup>65</sup> Thomas F. Torrance, *Theological Science*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969, note #4, pp. 30-31.

<sup>66</sup> Klinefelter, "Our Knowledge of God", p. 426.

### 1.3.2. MI's Logic: Reduces to a Saramental or Historical Model? Coherent?

Klinefelter's optimism about MI's logic constitutes something of a rarity in the research literature. It also instances a commonplace type of conjecture: Klinefelter maintains that Baillie's logic cogently articulates the epistemological connection between cognition (mediated knowledge) and "insight" (immediate knowledge) whilst simultaneously asserting that no logic exists for describing the immediate knowledge that is epistemically necessary for that connection. This raises the question: with what particular logic does Klinefelter know that MI's idea of immediacy describes the "particular logic" of faith?<sup>67</sup> Surely, Klinefelter undermines his claim MI cogently describes the logic of faith, when he concedes that that very logic is unknowable. This seeming double talk say nothing of the viability of Klinefelter's epistemologically related claim: "There are doubtless many serious difficulties with Baillie's controversial account of the relations of Christian and non-Christian religion . . ." <sup>68</sup> Klinefelter's seeming ignorance notwithstanding, Klinefelter yet knows how MI's logic must be interpreted—in order to be known: the logic of Baillie's "controversial epistemological model" of MI must be understood as one which "explicates the notion of a mediated immediacy on an historical rather than a moral or sacramental model."<sup>69</sup>

In "Mediated Immediacy: A Search for Some Models",<sup>70</sup> J. Brenton Stearns makes claims contrary to those of Klinefelter on the issue of the interpretation of MI's logic. For example, MI's logic should not be interpreted as an essentially historical model of revelation; rather, its logic reduces to that of a sacramental model of knowledge of God. Stearns also rejects Klinefelter's optimism about MI's logical coherence—that is, with regard to Baillie's particular concept of MI. Indeed, Stearns identifies several models of mediated immediacy, ordering them under three headings: the "other minds model,"

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<sup>67</sup> In light of Klinefelter's ambiguity, I must presume that Klinefelter is maintaining that MI's logic is: (1) a very good description of Christian faith, as a mode of knowing God (i.e., a good descriptive epistemology); (2) a poor elucidation of how Christian faith is epistemologically integrated with the non-Christian knowledge of God maintained by Baillie's doctrine of revelation: it's logic is not cogent concerning how knowledge of God is mediated by the experiences of persons devoid of discursive knowledge about (i.e., immediate knowledge of) Jesus Christ.

<sup>68</sup> "Our Knowledge of God", pp. 425-426.

<sup>69</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 409.

<sup>70</sup> J. Brenton Stearns, "Mediated Immediacy: A Search for Some Models", *International Journal for the Philosophy of Religion*, 3, 1972, pp. 195-211.

the “language model,” and Stearns’s own model. The distinguishing feature of the “other minds model”, the type to which Stearns assigns Baillie’s concept of MI, is its position that knowledge of God is partially analogous to knowledge of human “minds”. This so-called “other minds” model of mediated immediacy suffers shortcomings in general, maintains Stearns. For one, (1) “there may yet be inferences that are very fast, habitual, or tacit”, leading one to think falsely that one has immediate knowledge of human minds. Secondly, (2) “as Tennant tells us, we cannot move from psychological immediacy to epistemological ground for our beliefs without argument.” Thirdly, (3) it lacks “the epistemological credentials that make a belief rational . . .” Baillie’s particular model of MI, furthermore, (4) “hints” of a reduction to a Lutheran modification of the doctrine of transubstantiation. On grounds (1-4), Stearns rejects Baillie’s model of MI as a promising model for Christian thought.

More promising for Stearns is the second model of mediated immediacy, the “language model”. A model espoused by the “intellectual father of [John E.] Smith, Baillie, and Hocking—Josiah Royce,” its most distinguishing feature is that it “tells us . . . that the process of interpreting a manuscript gives us a clue as to how mediating signs can reveal and give us immediate contact with meaning.” In this regard, Royce’s model is, according to Stearns, particularly instructive; for it alone provides the “key insight” for modeling the logic of knowledge of God as a mediated immediacy. What is this key insight? It is that knowledge of God is mediated by a “triadic” relationship between God, the believer, and the coporeal world. Stearns elaborates:

The relation between the believer and God is to be constructed, like the relation between the reader and what he reads, as triadic. Imagine the worshiper, God, and religiously significant finite events as represented by three points on a triangle. The route from the worshiper to God is then both immediate (taking the short route along one side of a triangle) and mediated by the religiously significant finite events (taking the long route via the third point of the triangle. Mediated immediacy presents a problem only to the person who thinks all relations are dyadic.

Royce's "great insight", then, is that knowledge of God is mediated by an essentially triangular (triadic) relationship—that is, not mediated "through" the corporeal world to humans (dyadic). A logically consistent model of mediated immediacy must emulate Royce's model in this regard; only then can the "harsh paradox of 'mediated immediacy'" be "softened".

Stearns then turns to his allegedly superior model of mediated immediacy. A model which breaks from Royce's model—Royce's model, like all "language models", suffers the general criticism (1-3) advanced against the "other mind's" models—its strength is its resolution of the paradoxical logic of knowledge of God as mediated immediacy:

My models will have the feature, I might be so bold as to say advantage, of not being linked to an idealistic or dualistic psychology or to a theory of language that holds meaning to be a mental event . . . .  
 . . . . My model of mediated immediacy has the advantage of not being specifically Christian. It is tied to no particular metaphysics and to no particular interpretation of revelation. It finds its roots in human worship—wherever man recognizes, commits himself to, or hopes for the kingdom of God.<sup>71</sup>

Unfortunately, Stearns does not even attempt to resolve the paradox of the logic of mediated immediacy. Indeed, to one's knowledge, Stearns makes no mention of mediated immediacy in any of his subsequent research publications.

Klinefelter, then, contends that MI's logic of immediacy should be understood as espousing a logic that conforms to an essentially historical model of revelation; Stearns maintains, however, that Baillie's particular logic of MI "hints" of a reduction to a Lutheran sacramental model.<sup>72</sup> This interpretation, coupled with Stearns's optimism

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<sup>71</sup> Stearns's argument is on pp. 195-211, *passim*.

<sup>72</sup> In the article's conclusion, Stearns reduces Baillie's concept to a Lutheran sacramental model. He maintains that MI's logic is underwritten by that entailed in a sacramental idea of knowledge of God; that

about his allegedly superior model of mediated immediacy, constitutes the primary ground for Stearns's rejection of Baillie's concept of MI as a contribution to contemporary Christian thought. Klinefelter, however, is relatively optimistic about MI's contemporary promise, were MI's logic elucidated according to a historical model of revelation. What is common to each researcher's perspective? The validity of their (conflicting) interpretations of MI's logic and (conflicting) estimations of MI's potential for Christian thought is suspect.

### 1.3.3. MI: A Dyadic or Triadic Mediation of Knowledge of God? A Metaphysic?

MI's description of the mediation of knowledge of God has occasioned additional competing interpretations about MI in the research literature. For example, there is the current issue of whether MI's logic contends for a dyadic or triadic conceptualization of the mediation of knowledge of God.

Stearns, as noted, criticizes MI's description of the mediation of knowledge of God as being dyadically mediated—as coming “through” our knowledge of “other minds”. Power, however, offers a plausibly competing interpretation in his “Religious Faith and Pragmatic Semiotics,”<sup>73</sup> a paper in which Power develops his own idea of knowledge of God. Power announces in the paper's introduction that the mediation of knowledge of God must be conceived as a triadic relationship.

Mine is a plea for a kind of rationally constructed Peircean semiotics in order to understand religious faith, which indeed has a triadic structure [emphasis mine] consisting of cultural, existential, and ontological dimensions. The [1] cultural dimension involves the signs or *representamens* of religious communities, the [2] existential dimension involves the faith interpretants, and the [3] ontological dimension involves the realities and values which are taken to be the object or objects of religious faith.<sup>74</sup>

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this model is perennially open to debate; and that Baillie's idea of MI is unlikely as such to advance our understanding of the logic of knowledge of God as a MI. Stearns refers to Plantinga's remarks in his *God and Other Minds* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1967), p. 271. "Mediated Immediacy: A Search for Some Models", p. 202.

<sup>73</sup> "Religious Faith and Pragmatic Semiotics", a presentation for Highlands Institute for American Religious and Philosophical Thought, Highlands, NC, 23-27 June 2000.

<sup>74</sup> "Religious Faith and Pragmatic Semiotics", p. 2.



Elsewhere in the article, Power maintains that each node of the above threefold structure mediates, interestingly, an immediate knowledge. “Our experiences of things divine like our experiences non-divine are by-products of immediate or direct elements as well as mediate and direct elements...”<sup>75</sup> As such, Power appears to be advancing a variant of what Stearns calls the “language model” of MI.<sup>76</sup>

What evidence is there that Power interprets *Baillie's* concept of MI as advocating a triadic mediation of knowledge of God? For one, Power acknowledges that Baillie's thought has influenced his own. Secondly, he explicitly uses the language of mediation and immediacy to advance his model of mediated immediacy. Thirdly, he maintains elsewhere<sup>77</sup> that Baillie's model of MI is of historical value for contemporary Christian thought. Fourthly, nothing in the article suggests a dyadic interpretation of Baillie's model. Fifthly, Power's concept of mediated immediacy describes the mediation of knowledge of God as a triadic relationship—as does Baillie's model of mediated immediacy (discussed later in the thesis).

There is evidence that counts against Power's possible interpretation of MI's conceptualization of the mediation of knowledge of God as triadic, however. For one, Power's concept of mediated immediacy differs substantially from Baillie's concept of mediated immediacy. There is, notably, the explanatory scope of their models: Power aims to provide an all-encompassing model of reality (divine and non-divine). The scope of Baillie's logic of MI is also broad in that it seeks to describe how knowledge of God is mediated by knowledge about and of oneself, others and the world. Accordingly, MI's logic is couched, as we shall come to find, in Baillie's epistemology of reality as a multileveled, valuation field. Here too is a scope ambitious. However, Baillie's concept of MI hardly attempts to describe all of reality (the divine and non-divine, in Power's language). Furthermore, MI's logic neither attempts to justify nor to authenticate

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<sup>75</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>76</sup> “To take seriously these non-cultural givens [i.e., the triadic context that mediates knowledge of God], which evoke or elicit our non-semiotic responses [i.e., our immediate knowledge], is to take seriously Pierce's category of ‘secondness’ . . .” *Ibid.*, p. 12.

<sup>77</sup> William Power, “Our knowledge of God”, *Perspectives in Religious Studies*, Vol. 21, number 1, spring, 1994, pp. 231-243.

religious faith (see Chapter 2), whereas Power's logic of mediated immediacy undergirds a metaphysical system which Power is disposed to think can justify religious faith:

In my judgment . . . the partial knowledge of faith which religions have or for which they strive, needs further justification or validation within the context of some philosophical or metaphysical theory.<sup>78</sup>

There is evidence, then, for possibly conflicting interpretations about MI's description of the mediation of knowledge of God, although it is not conclusive.

#### **1.4. MI'S IMPORTANCE FOR BAILLIE'S MEDIATING THEOLOGY**

I have just noted McEnhill and Newlands's remark that MI is important for Baillie's mediating theology, as expressed in *Our Knowledge of God* (1939). Likewise, Brown has maintained that MI is "an important feature"<sup>79</sup> for that publication's articulation of his doctrine of the knowledge of God. That MI is important for Baillie's epistemology in *Our Knowledge of God* is evident. Not so apparent is the viability of Klinefelter's suggestion that the importance of MI's epistemology exceeds its impact on *Our Knowledge of God*: for Klinefelter does maintain that "mediated immediacy is the cornerstone of Baillie's epistemology of religion and . . . crucial for his doctrine of revelation".<sup>80</sup> Has the John Baillie research underestimated MI's importance for Baillie's critical thought as a whole? The correct answer to this question presupposes, amongst other things, an understanding of what Baillie means by MI. We have found scant evidence to persuade that the field presently understands what MI means—as evidenced in conflicting interpretations about MI's logic and instances of conceded confusion about that logic. Here, then, is a research issue: MI's meaning. Although the possibility that MI's meaning has been misunderstood allows for the possibility that MI's importance for Baillie's mediating theology has been underestimated, we have already found direct

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<sup>78</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 13.

<sup>79</sup> James Brown, "John Baillie" (pp. 17-29), p. 23. In *Theologians of our Time*, A.W. Hastings and E. Hastings, eds., Edinburgh, T&T Clark, 1966.

<sup>80</sup> "Our Knowledge of God", p. 409.

evidence for the plausibility of such an underestimation: Baillie's mediating theology evidences at least a 35-year preoccupation with ideas of revelation and knowledge of God; and MI is widely considered to be central to Baillie's ideas of revelation and knowledge. The conceptual integration of MI's logic with that of doctrines perennially featured in Baillie's mediating theology—this suggests the possibility that MI's importance has been underestimated. Accordingly, Fergusson and Newlands have each observed that MI's presence in *Our Knowledge of God* (1939) anticipates Baillie's thought in major works, such as *The Idea of Revelation in Recent Thought* (1956) and *The Sense of the Presence of God* (1962). This suggests that MI's importance for Baillie's thought extends beyond *Our Knowledge of God* and, as such, that prior research has underestimated MI's importance for Baillie's critical thought.

### 1.5. MI AND CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIAN THOUGHT

Is there adequate ground for thinking that MI holds promise for contemporary Christian thought? Seventy-five years of overwhelmingly negative criticism of MI would suggest that there is not.

Perhaps Baillie's "controversial epistemological model"<sup>81</sup> of MI does suffer many of the logical difficulties maintained by its critics. Nevertheless, that remains to be seen, as the backing for each line of that criticism is presently dubious—at best. For one, a review of the literature makes plain that each claimant invariably fails to substantiate such criticism with an understanding of the epistemological inner-workings of MI's logic. Of course, MI's critics could substantiate their claims via appeal to an authoritative elucidation of MI's logic. No such elucidation the inner-workings of MI's logic presently exists in the literature, however. Moreover, when researchers decree with certainty that MI's logic is flawed, they often overtly concede uncertainty about what MI means. However, it does not follow, as a matter of logical necessity, that a concept's logic must be incoherent, because one cannot understand what that logic means. Then again, there are those many competing interpretations about MI's logic: these do not persuade that the field as a whole is certain about what Baillie means by knowledge of God as MI. These

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<sup>81</sup> Klinefelter, "Our Knowledge of God", p. 409.

collective deficiencies hardly amount to a coercive argument for MI's logical incoherence.

Such less-than-persuasive support applies, by extension, to critics' claims for and against MI's negative impact on related doctrines. For instance, we have seen it being asserted that MI's illogic compromises both Baillie's idea of revelation and his Christology. That may be so; still, the verdict is presently out on the credibility of these claims, and their class (e.g., MI's illogic undermines Baillie's Christology): the field has not evidenced an understanding of the logic entailed in MI's meaning. The same goes for claims to MI's alleged ambiguity: it is not enough to assert that MI's logic is problematic.

The field of academic theology, then, is presently beset with substantial uncertainty about the validity of researchers' appraisals of MI's epistemic logic, be those appraisals philosophical and/or theological in origin; be those appraisals for or against MI's capacity to elucidate the logic of Christian faith. This present uncertainty about the status of MI's logic presents the possibility that MI, better understood, could be a contribution to contemporary Christian thought.

But here again, we find ourselves peering into a research consensus momentous and asking, "Is their evidence to suggest that the importance of Baillie's critical thought's is being unduly marginalized at present"—this time, not with regard to MI's importance for Baillie's mediating theology per se, but with regard to MI's potential for contemporary Christian thought. Is Baillie's idea of MI dinosaurian? Can it be resurrected—and survive? On appeal to authority, there is ground to think so. Fergusson, for one, maintains that MI is possibly Baillie's "most original contribution" to the doctrine of knowledge of God.<sup>82</sup> Indeed, it is perhaps ironic that Fergusson should suggest, if not overtly maintain, that a concept directly integrated with Baillie's idea of revelation could hold contemporary promise. However, Fergusson's criticism of Baillie's idea of revelation notwithstanding, this at is exactly how I interpret him, when he maintains that "Baillie's renowned concept of 'mediated immediacy . . . has important theological implications".<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>82</sup> Fergusson, *Selected Writings*, p. 3.

<sup>83</sup> "Orthodox Liberal", p. 141.

What might these implications be? At least one of them, as I see it, is suggested by Newlands. Observing that debates in epistemology (e.g., realism verses anti-realism) and semantics are much more sophisticated than were they during Baillie's day, Newlands continues on to say that

There has been... the rise of the phenomenon of post-modernism in its numerous expressions, and a reaction against the "foundationalist" views of reality common in philosophy of the early part of this century. No doubt Baillie would have been a keen observer [also] of these debates and would have drawn the implications for his theology.<sup>84</sup>

If Newlands is correct, then it is likely that the mediating theologian would consider postmodernism's implications for his epistemology (i.e., MI), and his epistemology's (i.e., MI's) implications for postmodernism, were he here today. Following Newlands's lead, I shall, in due course, square MI's epistemology with the postmodern ethos and draw implications for Baillie's thought, its contemporary relevance, included.

## 1.6. CONCLUSION

I conclude that academic theology can not be certain at present that Baillie's mediating theology is without a promising concept for contemporary Christian thought—this as evidenced by the 75-year legacy that is the scholarly criticism of MI: namely, the failure of this corpus to demonstrate an understanding of MI's logic and meaning.

Fergusson maintains that "Baillie's concept of 'mediated immediacy' remains worthy of serious theological attention".<sup>85</sup> We have found at least three major research issues in need of such attention: MI's meaning, its importance for Baillie's mediating theology, and its promise as a contribution to contemporary Christian thought. We have also discovered a host of minor research issues—a matter of several competing interpretations in need of resolution—and that the resolution of all issues, both major and

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<sup>84</sup> "The Sense of the Presence of God", p. 161.

<sup>85</sup> Fergusson, *Selected Writings*, pp. 3-4.

minor, beckons a fundamental understanding of MI's logic. John Baillie research must give these research issues serious attention. To fail to do so is, for one, to fail to advance its own understanding of possibly Baillie's most original contribution to the doctrine of knowledge of God *per se*, MI. To fail to advance our understanding of MI is to hinder unduly the research momentum, research progress, and refined understanding occasioned by the relatively recent resurgence in research on Baillie's life and thought—and this, plausibly, with pointedly negative consequences indeed: the concept in need of illumination is, as Newlands observes, that concept for which the illustrious mediating theologian is most notorious. To foreclose on such research investigation is lastly, to perpetuate unduly the field's present perplexity about MI's implications for Baillie's critical thought as a whole—namely, its importance for Baillie's mediating-theological corpus (perhaps also, its capacity to order much of Baillie's seemingly non-systematically elucidated corpus); and to perpetuate uncertainty about MI's implications for John Baillie's legacy—namely, his mediating theology's capacity to contribute a concept to a contemporary Christian thought in dialogue with a contemporary culture.

### **1.7. THESIS OBJECTIVES, METHOD AND GENERAL CONCLUSIONS**

My thesis, then, is an examination of John Baillie's concept of MI. The definitive body of research on MI to-date, it takes as its primary objectives the resolution of three major research issues: (1) MI's meaning; (2) MI's importance for Baillie's mediating theology; (3) MI's importance for contemporary Christian thought.

The thesis examines the three major research issues within three corresponding divisions. What ensues is a chapter-by-chapter summary of its basic method and general conclusions. The present introductory chapter has found that contemporary Christian thought is tacitly maintaining that John Baillie's mediating theology is without a promising concept or doctrine—this as evidenced in works which evaluate: (a) contributions from contemporary Christian theologies in general (surveys of Christian thought); (b) ideas emphasized in Baillie's mediating theology (revelation, knowledge of God) that are conceptually intertwined with MI's logic (surveys of the idea of revelation); (c) the legacy of Baillie's mediating theology (Baillie researchers' overall evaluations of Baillie's thought). I have argued that the credibility of (a-c) is presently suspect, on the

ground that there presently exists much debate about what Baillie means by MI, as evidenced in competing interpretations about MI's logic, each of whose validity is uncertain at present. Chapter 2 resolves the issue of MI's meaning, by providing the elucidation of MI's logic that has been perennially in need since 1939. Drawing primarily from Baillie's thought on MI in *Our Knowledge of God*, I elucidate the structure of MI's logic, identify four ways that MI functions in Baillie's thought, and contend that MI's meaning varies, depending on how Baillie's apologetic employs MI in service to his mediating theology. The richer and requisite understanding of MI's meaning now in-hand—prior research has tended to interpret MI's meaning in light of only two oft functions—the thesis turns to the second division (Chapters 3-5) to engage the second research issue: MI's importance for Baillie's mediating theology. This move serves two major purposes: (1) It helps the reader to understand fuller MI's meaning: guided by the now-clarified conceptual understanding of MI's meaning, including its multi-functionality, the reader is able to locate MI and to witness its evolution within the dynamic apologetic context of Baillie's development as a mediating theologian. This move also (2) helps the reader appreciate the concept's importance for Baillie's mediating theology as a whole. Specifically, this division diachronically traces Baillie's theological development from 1925 to 1960. An investigation of Baillie's major<sup>86</sup> and minor, it lays emphasis on the explication of primary sources which (a) speak directly to doctrines emphasized in Baillie's mediating theology throughout Baillie's academic career—Baillie's ideas of religious experience, revelation, knowledge of God and God—and (b) speak directly to MI's development, its ideas of mediation and immediacy, in particular. The explication and examination of this conceptual and historical interplay—this play between Baillie's mediating theology and MI—is carried out within the context of Baillie's Christian apologetics, in particular. Chapter 3 focuses on MI's development in Baillie's early childhood and formal education—experiences which would influence Baillie's apologetic strategy and, in time, his development of MI. Chapter 4 examines the apologetic moves in Baillie's "early mediating theology" (1925-1939: pre-*Our*

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<sup>86</sup>In particular: *The Roots of Religion in the Human Soul* (1926), *The Interpretation of Religion: An Introductory Study of Theological Principles* (1928), *The Place of Jesus Christ in Modern Christianity* (1929), *Our Knowledge of God* (1939), *The Idea of Revelation in Recent Thought* (1956), *The Sense of The Presence of God* (1962), *A Reasoned Faith* (1963).

*Knowledge of God*); Chapter 5, the apologetic moves in Baillie's "latter mediating theology" (1939-1962: post-*Our Knowledge of God*).<sup>87</sup>

The third division (Chapters 6-9) resolves each of the major research issues: MI's meaning, importance for Baillie's mediating theology, and promise for contemporary Christian thought. The thesis, which has now equipped the reader with both a requisite static-conceptual (first division) and requisite historical-dynamic (second division) understanding of MI's meaning, turns to Chapter 6 and resolves several sub-issues concerning the meaning of MI's descriptive epistemology. Is MI a metaphysical structure or argument for knowledge of God? Does the logic of MI essentially reduce to an historical or sacramental model of knowledge of God? Does MI's logic describe the mediation of knowledge of God as being a dyadic or a triadic relationship? Does MI's logic separate faith from knowledge, or does it contend for an organic epistemological connection between faith and knowledge? Does the model's idea of immediacy fail to express a "theological understanding" of Christian knowledge of God, or does it convey the very "logic of faith" itself? Does MI's idea of immediacy demonstrate that Baillie's thought advocates logical agnosticism? Does MI depersonalize Christian faith in Jesus Christ? Can MI's logic be modeled? In Chapter 6, I systematically evaluate these manifold competing interpretations that have both evidenced and perpetuated the field's confusion about MI's meaning, and draw conclusions on each research issue. Chapter 7 briefly recounts the diachronic trace's findings. Drawing from them, I weigh in on the second, major research issue, MI's importance for Baillie's thought: I argue that MI is the most important concept for Baillie's mediating theology. It is a conclusion which challenges the consensus view in the research—one which has tended to limit MI's importance to Baillie's *Our Knowledge of God* (1939), save some residual effects for works such as his *Idea of Revelation in Recent Thought* (1956) and *The Sense of the Presence of God* (1962). Chapter 8 centers on the third, major research issue, MI's promise for contemporary Christian thought. My method, in brief, is to evaluate MI's promise by subjecting it not only to the criticism of opponents whose tendency has been to dismiss, often dogmatically, two of the concept's function dogmatically on theological grounds; but by also subjecting each of its four functions to more contemporary criticism,

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<sup>87</sup> The rationale for this scheme is addressed in the division's beginning chapter, Chapter 3.



including that from theological and epistemological and cognitive-psychological quarters. In keeping with the thrust of the criticism of MI, a substantially more sophisticated corpus of criticism is brought to bear on the logic of MI's idea of immediacy, in particular. In light of the evaluation, I concede that much of the (now-substantiated) criticism of MI has been legitimate. However, as against the thrust of Baillie research, I argue that one of MI's functions—one that has been overlooked in the literature—is a promising contribution to contemporary Christian thought. As support for my argument, and in keeping with MI's various loci of inspiration—MI, true to the mediating theologian's form, draws strength from theological, philosophical, and empirical-psychological intellectual currents, I take an inter-disciplinary and somewhat unconventional approach as support my argument for MI's present promise. This includes appeal to the concept's correspondence with Christian theological-epistemological and empirical cognitive-psychological interpretations of religious experience, as well as appeal to the concept's utility value for the Christian tradition in its dialogue with postmodernity. Chapter 9 summarizes the research findings and contributions, finishing with suggestions for future lines of research on MI.<sup>88</sup>

## 1.8. LIMITATIONS

The scope of John Baillie's mediating theology. Baillie's efforts as a mediating theologian included his service to the Christian faith as a writer of both devotional works and critical works. This thesis is primarily concerned with Baillie's critical works.

Major source emphasis. Baillie wrote several books and articles. This thesis focuses primarily on works that are essential for understanding Baillie's thought on the problems of knowledge of God and revelation. Of Baillie's major works, his *The Interpretation of Religion* (1929), *Our Knowledge of God* (1939), and *The Sense of the Presence of God* (1962) are: (1) regularly consulted in expositions and critiques of Baillie's thought on the problems of knowledge of God and revelation; (2) widely considered to be Baillie's three most substantive and scholarly works; (3) essential for understanding the arc of Baillie's mediating theology's development: they chronicle Baillie's earliest, middle and final

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<sup>88</sup> See Appendix B, which provides a detailed schematic of the thesis' architecture.

thought. Baillie's *The Roots of Religion in the Human Soul* (1926) and *The Idea of Revelation in Recent Thought* (1956) are less beefy, though essential for understanding Baillie's thought on the ideas of revelation and knowledge of God.

Doctrines and ideas examined. Baillie wrote on several Christian doctrines. This thesis focuses primarily on Baillie's thought on revelation, knowledge of God and religious experience. This thesis aims to trace and order the development of Baillie's non-systematic mediating theology; research indicates that Baillie was preoccupied with the doctrines of knowledge and God and revelation throughout his academic career. Insofar as a sustained focus on doctrines prevalent throughout a thinker's career holds promise for meeting the above objectives, the method is warranted. The thesis also aims to assess MI's importance for Baillie's mediating theology, as well as to understand MI's meaning. Research indicates that MI is central to Baillie's doctrine of the knowledge and his idea of revelation. It also suggests that MI is important for Baillie's idea of religious experience. Consequently, this thesis's examination of Baillie's mediating theology is one whose primary focus is on the above doctrines and ideas, their impact on MI's meaning and development (and vice versa), included.

## DIVISION I: MI'S MEANING

### 2. MI'S FOUR FUNCTIONS

There is presently much confusion about MI's meaning, as evidenced in the previous chapter's review of the literature. This chapter provides the elucidation of MI's "controversial logic" that is necessary to resolve the many conflicting interpretations about MI's meaning.

In order to understand MI's meaning, it is necessary to understand two contexts in which MI functions: its conceptual context, including its relationships to Baillie's ideas of divine action, revelation, knowledge of God and religious experience; and its chronological context, Baillie's use of MI in the historical context of his apologetic, his ongoing debates with various intellectual currents in particular. This chapter centers on MI's conceptual context. It begins by orienting the reader with Baillie's mediating theology in general. It then narrows the focus, expositing Baillie's thought on the objectives of Christian apologetics, language's epistemic limitations and the nature of Divine-human encounter. That more general conceptual context having been provided, it hones in on the issue of MI's meaning. Drawing from a close reading of *Our Knowledge of God* (1939), the chapter elucidates MI's logic, giving particular attention to Baillie's thought on divine action, revelation, knowledge of God, and religious experience. In so doing, it relates MI's logic to core epistemic positions maintained by Baillie throughout his career as a mediating theologian. Major epistemology-oriented works include Baillie's early publications, *The Interpretation of Religion* (1926) and *The Roots of Religion in the Human Soul* (1928), and his latter publications, *The Idea of Revelation in Recent Thought* (1956) and *The Sense of the Presence of God* (1962). In addition to providing the reader a conceptual context for understanding MI, this chapter's elucidation of MI's logic provides the provisional understanding of MI's meaning that is necessary for the subsequent division's consideration of MI's development in Baillie's mediating theology.

My conclusion for this chapter is that MI serves four major functions in Baillie's mediating theology. A more precise interpretation of MI's meaning than found in the previous research, whose tendency has been to identify only two of MI's functions, my modeling of MI's logic in this chapter provides much of the conceptual groundwork required for the resolution of the two other research problems that are presently plaguing the research: MI's importance for Baillie's mediating theology (division two) and MI's value for contemporary Christian thought (division three).

## 2.1. JOHN BAILLIE: A MEDIATING THEOLOGIAN

The phrase "mediating theology" derives from a group of 19<sup>th</sup> century theologians concerned to reconcile the Christian faith with modern scientific consciousness in particular. Today, the phrase is typically used in a more general sense: to designate Christian theologies whose aim is to reconcile religious beliefs with secular intellectual currents, in general.<sup>89</sup>

It is this more general that Baillie's theology has been identified as a mediating theology. We have already found Mackay (1956), Power (1968) and Newlands (2002) identifying Baillie as a "mediating theologian" who attempted to reconcile the Christian faith with non-Christian intellectual currents; Macquarrie, for example, has also alluded to Baillie's mediating theology, when he notes that one aspect of Baillie's "post-liberal" theology constitutes "an attempt to combine the best insight of both liberal and dialectical theology".<sup>90</sup> Fergusson, whose preference is for "orthodox-liberal", has more recently underscored that breadth of the scope of Baillie's "mediating theology": here one finds an attempt "to reconcile the methods of philosophy and theology, liberalism and orthodoxy, Christianity and contemporary culture, and hope for this world with faith in the life to come."<sup>91</sup> It is Klinefelter, however, who perhaps provides the fullest insight into the mediating theologian's great breadth of scope and many attempted theological-conceptual reconciliations:

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<sup>89</sup> See Claude Welch, *Protestant Theology in the Nineteenth Century* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1972), Vol. I, 1799-1870, esp. Chapter 12: "Mediation, Speculation and Criticism", pp. 269-291.

<sup>90</sup> *Twentieth Century Religious Thought*, p. 349.

<sup>91</sup> David A.S. Fergusson, "John Baillie: Orthodox Liberal". In *Christ, Church and Society: Essays on John Baillie and Donald Baillie*, ed. David A.S. Fergusson (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1993), p. 152.

John Baillie both temperamentally and professionally served as a mediator and interpreter among competing Continental, British, and American theologies; between naturalism and supernaturalism; reason and revelation; science and history; empiricism and rationalism; theology and philosophy; morality and religion; orthodoxy and liberalism; liberalism and neo-orthodoxy; neo-orthodoxy and Post-Barthian liberalism; and finally, between the several Christian and non-Christian communions.<sup>92</sup>

Baillie, to my knowledge, overtly labeled himself neither a "mediating theologian" nor his theology a "mediating theology". Nonetheless, Baillie was surely a mediating theologian who attempted to reconcile Christian faith with culture in general: save his own professed "desire to combine liberalism with a recast orthodoxy",<sup>93</sup> and that he sought reconciliation between the aforementioned theological positions and those intellectual currents indicated by Klinefelter; as Baillie's own theological corpus makes plain, Baillie was a theologian who routinely engaged several academic fields and disciplines, including (for instance) philosophy, philosophical theology, philosophy of religion, theoretical and empirical psychology and theoretical physics. Baillie's many wanderings into these fields and disciplines have immediate implications for our understanding of MI. We shall also find in time that they also carry implications for our (multi-disciplinary) evaluation of MI.

## 2.2. CHRISTIAN THEOLOGICAL SCIENCE: ITS METHOD AND AIMS

Baillie's major publications span roughly thirty-five years. They begin with *The Roots of Religion in the Human Soul* (1926) and conclude with his 1960 Gifford Lectures, completed right before his death, posthumously published as *The Sense of the Presence of God* (1962). These, Baillie's first and last major works, disclose Baillie's enduring fundamental epistemic commitments, including his thought on the aims of Christian apologetics. As such, they are essential for understanding possibly Baillie's

<sup>92</sup> Donald S. Klinefelter, "The Theology of John Baillie", p. 434.

<sup>93</sup> John Baillie, "The Idea of Orthodoxy", cited in Fergusson, "Orthodox Liberal", n #18, p. 131.

most important epistemological and apologetic construct, MI. This conceptual interplay between Baillie's basic epistemology, his thought on Christian apologetics, and MI come to the fore, when we consider the contours of Baillie's mediating-theological method, Baillie's thought on the limits of religious language, and Baillie's thought on the epistemological relationship between realities and truths, in particular.

Baillie's second major publication is *The Interpretation of Religion*.<sup>94</sup> Essentially an amplification of his more concise *The Roots of Religion*, which had been published three years earlier, it is plausibly Baillie's most substantive and scholarly work.<sup>95</sup> Therein, we gain insight into Baillie's early theological method and attempt to reconcile the Christian faith with a host of intellectual currents, including several theologies, philosophies and psychologies. Baillie's method of choice is the "science of religion—the science, that is, which selects religion as its special object of study."<sup>96</sup> Such "theological science" is a "science of spirit" (*Geisteswissenschaften*) not unlike Socrates' own investigation of the "human things" (*ta anthrōpina*) or "things of the soul" (*tēs psychēs*),<sup>97</sup> in that it examines human consciousness. It differs markedly from Socrates' investigation of the human soul, however, in that its method interrogates the specifically religious consciousness<sup>98</sup> with the view to elucidate "what religion really is".<sup>99</sup>

### 2.3. LANGUAGE ABOUT KNOWLEDGE OF GOD: ITS AIMS AND LIMITS

Baillie's mediating theology (hereafter, MT) maintains, throughout its development,<sup>100</sup> that the following epistemological and ontological claims are true: (1) all persons appear to have some knowledge of God; (2) such universal knowledge of God

<sup>94</sup> *The Interpretation of Religion: An Introductory Study of Theological Principles* (Edinburgh: T & T Clark, 1929).

<sup>95</sup> "Orthodox Liberal", pp. 127-128.

<sup>96</sup> *IOR*, p. 3.

<sup>97</sup> *IOR*, p. 4.

<sup>98</sup> "The real object of theological study is not ultimate reality in all its aspects, but only those aspects of ultimate reality which are approached by us through the religious consciousness . . ." *IOR*, p. 30.

<sup>99</sup> "We . . . define the business of theological science as *the interrogation of the religious consciousness with a view to discovering what religion really is.*" [Baillie's emphasis] *IOR*, p. 14.

<sup>100</sup> In division two it will become apparent that the early mediating theologian's (1926-38) theological-scientific method, apologetic strategy and core theological positions all anticipate the latter theologian's (c. 1939) position that knowledge of God is a MI. We shall also find that the theological-scientific method employed by Baillie in his early mediating theology is consistent with theological positions for which he later contended.

is always a divinely-initiated, continuous self-disclosure of God; (3) knowledge of God, be it a universal knowledge of God, or a specifically Christian knowledge of God, is always an immediate or direct knowledge of God; (4) knowledge of God is always mediated by the individual's unique, concrete circumstances; (5) knowledge of God is always a knowledge of Personality by personalities. These core claims have several implications for the aims and limitations of language about God. For example, when Baillie's early theology attempts to "exhibit" aspects of God's "relationship to the soul" through an interrogation of religious consciousness, it presupposes that no language can demonstrate God's existence, including propositions derived from religious consciousness, moral consciousness, empirical arguments, rationalist arguments or, even, divine revelation. That said, language can at least say something about humans' beliefs about the God-human relationship itself: as Baillie's own method presupposes, language can, for instance, "exhibit" the *belief content* of humanity's religious consciousness of humanity. Such limitations on language reflect Baillie's position that knowledge of God is an immediate knowledge.

What specifically, then, should Christian theological language aim to exhibit? Theological science indicates that most humans appear to believe (explicitly or tacitly) that they have an immediate knowledge of God (i.e., revelation), and that such immediate knowledge is evidenced in, though not logically demonstrated by, their religious and moral consciousness of supreme Value. Baillie finds evidence for this in both the moral commitments of theists and intellectual atheists. When theological science interrogates the religious consciousness of the theist, it finds that knowledge of God is widely believed to be a self-authenticating, direct or immediate knowledge (non-logically demonstrable knowledge) of God's Self-disclosure in and to humans moral consciousness—one which occasions faith or trust in God (i.e., religious consciousness), Supreme Value. When theological science interrogates the moral consciousness of those who has not placed their faith in God (i.e., does not have religious consciousness), such as the intellectual agnostic or atheist, it finds that moral consciousness' knowledge of moral value (a good) also presupposes knowledge of a source of supreme value (Good), whose truth value can neither be apprehended nor totalized nor validated by language's logic. In short, the intellectual atheist and agnostic's positions are, like the theist's, never

established by logical certainty, but grounded rather in a non-discursive or immediate knowledge (i.e., is a knowledge by faith). Part of the Christian apologist's task is to bring that to light, when battling with language.

In keeping with his position that language can never totalize the ground for our moral and religious convictions, Baillie places limitations on the logic of theological science's own language, including its capacity to capture fully the content exhibited by its interrogation of religious consciousness:

But while it is thus completely wrong in principle to expect from the study of theology that it should either bring faith originally to birth in our souls or to give it a securer grounding in them than it has in the souls of other men, yet on the other hand there is undoubtedly a real service which theology is able to render towards the establishment of faith in the world. For though it cannot provide religion with any new assurance of truth, it can at least disclose the nature of the assurance which it already possesses. If it cannot *prove* the truth of religion, it can at least *exhibit* the truth of it.<sup>101</sup>

When considered, then, from an apologetic perspective, Baillie's early mediating theology clearly conceives of theological language as being primarily evocative in function: when the Christian apologist uses theological language to contend for the Christian faith, theological language can evoke reflection upon an already-present immediate knowledge of God made present in and to both humans' religious and moral consciousness. When considered from a theological-epistemological perspective, theological language can, at best, only *mediate* immediate knowledge of God.<sup>102</sup>

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<sup>101</sup> *IOR*, p. 24. Baillie's italicized emphasis.

<sup>102</sup> Although I can not establish it here, Baillie's position is that theological language's mediation of immediate knowledge of God extends to theological language about God's "continual invasion" and progressive Self-disclosure in and to persons' moral and religious consciousnesses, "in, with and under" concrete events that constitute their personal histories and which invariably mediate knowledge of God. This includes God's disclosure "in, with and under" the concrete events that constituted the life of Jesus, as well as the life-events of the witnesses of persons who constituted the early Christian church. Considered from a more mentalistic and cognitive psychological perspective, such a progressive and more profound awareness of God, through God's self-disclosure in Christ, includes humans' movement from immediate



In the subsequently published *Our Knowledge of God* (1939), Baillie jettisons the theological-scientific method described by Fergusson as being quasi-phenomenological.<sup>103</sup> However, he continues to maintain that Christian-apologetic aim is primarily evocative in function: it aims to evoke or bring forward humans' late belief in Supreme Value. Accordingly, Baillie's epistemology still maintains belief that theological language can mediate an immediate knowledge of God—can facilitate, as Baillie puts it in Tillichian language, one's being in a "revelatory situation". What makes for a particularly likely revelatory situation? Baillie's epistemology continues to emphasize that situations characterized by personalities in personal relations are particularly ripe for the mediation of immediate knowledge of God, as God is a personal agent: such situations of fellowshiping are often characterized by humans' engagement with each others' moral consciousness. A fellowshiping with one's fellowship that is characterized by actions and language reflective of the virtue of *agapē* (i.e., *koinonia*) is particularly promising for mediating immediate knowledge of, and a deepening faith in, God. A trans-personal contextuality and *agapē*-oriented relational quality increasingly emphasized by Baillie's latter epistemology-oriented works' articulation of the mediation of immediate knowledge of God, it is a node in Baillie's idea of revelation (knowledge of others) to which he a conceptually ties an also increasing feature in Baillie's latter epistemological works: the proclamation of the Gospel language for the mediation of immediate knowledge of God's being in Jesus Christ.<sup>104</sup> Here, Gospel language, is potent theological language for the Christian apologist who would speak the truth in love.

We see, then, a mediating theologian armed with a more overtly critical-realist theological epistemology, albeit one whose epistemology continues to rely heavily on a distinction made in Baillie's early mediating theology: second-order reflection about knowledge of God (e.g., theological language, apologetics; Gospel proclamation) can refer to first-order, immediate knowledge of God. In both *Our Knowledge of God* and the

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knowledge or faith in God in general (general revelation) to the specifically Christian human's immediate knowledge or faith in God's being in Jesus Christ (special revelation). One might rightly say that, for Baillie's epistemology, theological language can, does and must make way for the coming of the Lord—must, that is, evoke faith in the Mediator, by engaging religious consciousness (i.e., moral consciousness) with the logic of a well-reasoned faith.

<sup>103</sup> Fergusson, "Orthodox Liberal", p. 128.

<sup>104</sup> In keeping with Baillie's exposure to Barth's thought in the 1930's. Discussed in chapter 5.

*Sense of the Presence of God*,<sup>105</sup> Baillie distinguishes first-order “knowledge of” “realities” from second-order “knowledge about” “truths”—this while maintaining that, while distinct, truths about God (and about other realities) and immediate knowledge of God (and other realities) are yet epistemologically connected. A basic understanding of this constant feature of Baillie’s epistemology is necessary for understanding MI’s meaning, logic and functions for Baillie’s MT.

(1) *Language can say something about realities.* Second-order “truths” (i.e., discursive language) “about” primordial “realities”—the realities “God and the external world”—*can* describe the realities about whom (or which) we have knowledge “of” (i.e., know immediately).

(2) *Language about God is epistemologically authoritative over language about other realities.* Knowledge of God, knowledge of others, and knowledge of our self are mediated-immediate knowledges. Knowledge of God is always mediated by, and always occurs contemporaneously with, knowledge of other realities (the external world, ourselves, others). Knowledge of God, however, has “logical priority” over all other knowledges: God is the ground of all being, the Reality most directly known, and the ground for all knowing, including our knowledge of other realities. Accordingly, analogies established between human knowledge of God and human knowledge of human minds should not proceed according to the veridicality of the latter. *Summa summarum*: inasmuch as language refers to God, it is, with regard to matters of Christian faith, normative over language about all other realities (e.g., human minds). Here is an affirmation of the authority of scripture over, for instance, psychology, in matters of faith.<sup>106</sup>

(3) *Language can neither totalize Reality nor realities.* Baillie’s distinction between second-order theological truths about religious consciousness and religious

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<sup>105</sup> “We must say that our knowledge of the realities themselves—whether these be the external world or God—is primary and our knowledge of truths concerning them secondary.” *SPG*, p. 113.

<sup>106</sup> All of this reflects Baillie’s early MT’s interrogation of human consciousness—one that indicates the widely held belief that a universal knowledge of God is logically primary to our knowledge of other realities.

consciousness' immediate knowledge of primordial Reality places limitations on language's capacity to describe realities. In short, second-order truths can never exhaust the realities to which they (somehow) refer: ultimately, each "reality" is immediately known—known, that is, in a non-propositional manner. Knowledge of the "Really Real", God, is *sui generis*—knowledge made possible only by "faith" a "primary mode of awareness". Language about faith's immediate knowledge of God—be it second-order reflection about the exhibitions of a universal, immediate knowledge of God's Presence in and to humans' moral consciousness of value; or, rather, second-order reflection about the specifically Christian religious consciousness' knowledge of God's being in Jesus Christ—a religious consciousness which is itself conceived by Baillie (I shall argue) as being mediated by second-order discursive reasoning about an organically and epistemologically connected, latent knowledge of God available in and to humankind's moral consciousness of value—no theologian's and/or apologist's language can ever totalize realities, be they personalities (God, self, others) or objects (the cosmos).

Accordingly, though the Christian apologist's language about the Mediator who mediates Christian knowledge of God can be effective as means of mediating knowledge of God, no theological and/or apologetic content can ever exhaust the specific personality of Jesus Christ:

The infinite riches of the divine Personality who is revealed to us in Christ cannot be exhaustively enclosed in any number of abstract nouns. In every such abstraction, in every such conceptualizing, we are also to some extent falsifying by regarding one aspect of the living whole in temporary isolation; and not all possible abstractions added together can make up the living whole itself.<sup>107</sup>

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<sup>107</sup> *IRRT*, p. 27.

#### 2.4. THE LANGUAGE OF CHRISTIAN APOLOGETICS: ITS PURPOSE

If, then, language about religion in general cannot demonstrate God's existence, what is its value for the specifically Christian apologist? Its purpose, as already indicated at several turns, is an evocative one.

Baillie's position is that a proper Christian apologetics uses language (doctrinal, or otherwise) to clarify humans' *already-present* faith in God—that is, to drive persons to a deeper awareness of God's presence in and to the soul, thereby facilitating the will's resolve to follow God in faith. Indeed, the Christian apologist uses language to “exhibit” to the individual the beliefs inherent in the individual's *own* religious consciousness—to exhibit God's dealings with the human soul. This strategy of facilitating a heightened awareness of religious consciousness' latent beliefs about the I-Thou *relation*—beliefs informed by God's self-disclosure to humans in their moral consciousness of value—demands language which will help persons become self-consciously aware of their “repressed” awareness of God. Baillie is rather clear about this in *Our Knowledge of God*:

For though we may not try to prove either to ourselves or to others that God exists, we may do something to persuade both others and ourselves *that we already believe in Him* [Baillie's emphasis] . . . Such is the only legitimate kind of theistic proof. ‘The true business of philosophy, wrote Cook Wilson . . . seems to be to bring the belief to consciousness itself.’ It is to this end that the whole argument of this book has been directed . . .<sup>108</sup>

Accordingly, Baillie's own arguments in *Our Knowledge of God* take aim at intellectual atheists in particular: They engage thinkers whom, denying God's existence with the “top of their heads,” do yet believe, Baillie insists, in God's existence in “the bottom of their hearts.” (cf. the early mediating theologian's thought on universal knowledge of God). As partial support for Baillie's apologetic strategy, he contends that although atheists reject a moral Absolute, atheists yet typically contend for high moral ideals, often living

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<sup>108</sup> *OKG*, p. 240.

their own lives as if a moral Absolute exists. This inconsistency between the intellectual atheist's theory and praxis does not demonstrate God's existence; however, it does provide ground for a central claim advanced in *Our Knowledge of God*: all humans, atheists included, operate as if having an immediate, though also mediated, knowledge of God.<sup>109</sup>

Baillie's idea of immediacy, then, is of critical importance to Baillie's critical thought in at least two senses: for one, it informs Baillie's thought on the limitations and purpose of theological language. In addition, it informs Baillie's perspective on Christian apologetic strategy: although discursive reasoning about theological propositions cannot, in and of itself, provide immediate knowledge of God; that immediate Christian knowledge of God is invariably mediated by discursive reasoning underscores the epistemic value in the proclamation of Christian doctrine, including the Gospel message. It is in this context that we must understand MI's own meaning, functions and epistemic limitations.

We are now in a position to unpack MI's logic.<sup>110</sup>

## 2.5. BAILLIE'S CORE THOUGHT ON MI

A MT whose primary objective is to describe religious consciousness needs a concept to describe religious consciousness. A MT which tries to correlate the phenomena of religious experience with a theology of revelation needs a concept for correlating the same. A MT apologetic in orientation needs a concept to function within its apologetic framework and to help it realize its apologetic aims. A MT broad in scope—one which mediates amongst multiple philosophical and theological perspectives—needs a multi-functional concept with multi-disciplinary applicability. A MT preoccupied with ideas of revelation, knowledge of God and religious experience throughout its historical development needs a concept to integrate those ideas. A MT with an increasingly Christocentric emphasis needs a concept to integrate its Christology with

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<sup>109</sup> As examined in detail in the second division.

<sup>110</sup> I have had to take a somewhat abstract approach toward the topics of theological language and apologetics to help the reader begin to frame an understanding of MI. As an aid to the reader who would benefit from a more conventional and concrete approach, I have recast the material in terms of the Christian apologist's task and use of language (see Appendix).

its epistemology. MI serves Baillie's MT in all of the above-indicated capacities, as evidenced in the concept's four functions.

An understanding of MI should ultimately derive from Baillie's own thought on MI. The mediating theologian first identifies the concept (explicitly) in plausibly his most important Christian apologetic work, *Our Knowledge of God* (1939). A section dedicated to the concept ("Mediated Immediacy") provides some initial insight into MI's importance for both Baillie's Christology and his doctrine of the knowledge of God:

This is what I have tried to express in the conception of a mediated immediacy. In Christ we know God not by argument but by personal acquaintance. In Christ God comes to us directly.<sup>111</sup>

Although the above passage spells out some of Baillie's objectives for MI, it is not self-evident what Baillie means by the concept, as he offers no formal definition of it. To compound matters, Baillie uses MI to speak to a host of related ideas. In order to appreciate MI's richness of complexity and functional versatility for Baillie's thought, it is necessary to quote Baillie at length—and this all the more so, as Baillie's synopsis will form the basis for my own interpretation of MI's meaning:

Though we are more directly and intimately confronted with the presence of God than with any other presence, it does not follow that He is ever present to us *apart* from all other experiences . . .  
 . . . [N]o one of the four subjects of our knowledge—ourselves, our fellows, the corporeal world, and God—is ever presented to us except in conjunction with all three of the others . . . .  
 . . . We do not know God through the world, but we know him with the world; and in knowing Him with the world, we know him as its ground. Nature is not an argument for God, but it is a sacrament of Him. Just as in the sacrament

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<sup>111</sup> *OKG*, pp. 196-197.

of Holy Communion the Real Presence of Christ is given (if the Lutheran phrase may here be used without prejudice) ‘in, with and under’ the bread and wine, so in a wider sense the whole corporeal world may become sacramental to us of the presence of the Triune God.

. . . But it is equally certain that our knowledge of God is given “in, with, and under” our knowledge of one another. This means, first, that knowledge of God is withholden from those who keep themselves aloof from the *service* [Baillie’s italics] of their fellows . . . It means, second, that only when I am in *fellowship* [Baillie’s italics] with my fellow men does the knowledge of God come to me individually . . . It means, third, the necessity of history. . . The Christian knowledge of God is not given to any man save in conjunction with the telling of an ‘old, old, story’. Therefore, it means, lastly, the necessity of Christ, God incarnate in the flesh. . . The service of others, the fellowship with others, and the historical tradition in which I stand are all media that leads me to the Mediator, and the Mediator leads me to God.

. . . . Clearly, then, the immediacy of God’s presence to our soul is a mediated immediacy [emphasis mine].<sup>112</sup>

Baillie also has this to say about MI:

The kind of directness for which we have contended in our knowledge of God is thus not at all interfered with, but rather is implemented, by the fact of Christ’s mediatorship. This is what I have tried to express in the conception of a mediated immediacy. In Christ we know God not by argument but by personal acquaintance. In Christ God comes to us directly [emphasis mine].<sup>113</sup>

Lastly, Baillie remarks:

We have to face the fact that we have to do here with an experience of an entirely unique kind, its uniqueness lying precisely in this conjunction of immediacy with mediacy—that is, in the fact that God reveals Himself to me only

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<sup>112</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 178-181, *passim*.

<sup>113</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 196-197.

through others who went before, yet in so doing reveals himself to me now [emphasis mine].<sup>114</sup>

In light of the above remarks, we are now in a position to summarize Baillie's thought on MI:

*Knowledge of God always arrives indirectly—it is "mediated" by propositional knowledge about oneself, the world, and others—though also always directly—it is a first-order, non-inferential ("immediate") knowledge of God (not a second-order abstraction about God). A specifically Christian knowledge of God is a non-propositional knowledge (immediate knowledge) of God's being in Jesus Christ (the "Mediator"). This knowledge, like general knowledge of God, is mediated by knowledge about oneself, the world, and others. It is also mediated by knowledge of God, in the general sense.*

Given MI's already apparent versatility Baillie's MT, it is not entirely surprising that over 75 years of research has struggled to understand the meaning of MI's logic. That meaning becomes clear, however, when each of MI's four functions are expounded in light of the above crystallization of Baillie's thought on MI, situated within the broader theological context provided earlier in this chapter.

## **2.6. MI'S FIRST FUNCTION: A DESCRIPTION OF DIVINE ACTION**

MI serves four functions in Baillie's thought: (1) a description of the mediation of divine action, (2) a description of revelation, (3) a description of the epistemology of Christian religious experience and (4) a normative epistemology for knowledge of God. We begin with the first function.

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<sup>114</sup> *Ibid.*, 185. Baillie's thoughts on MI come from the section in *Our Knowledge of God* (Chapter IV, Sec. 16) with the same name. This section, which lays out MI's basic conceptual framework, is followed by the final chapter of the book—a chapter which is largely an in-depth discussion about MI's ideas of mediation and immediacy (e.g., our immediate knowledge of "the world of others").



MI's first function is to describe divine action. In his *The Idea of Revelation in Recent Thought* (1956), Baillie indicates that divine action is a divinely initiated disclosure of God to human consciousness:

God reveals himself in *action*—in the gracious activity by which He [God] invades the field of human experience and human history which is otherwise a vain show, empty and drained of meaning.<sup>115</sup>

Mediated by human experience, divine action is a divinely initiated “continuous invasion” of human experience, according to Baillie. Yet, it is with such action that God is, paradoxically, made directly present in and to the human soul. In *Our Knowledge of God*, for example, Baillie divulges: “The position I am maintaining is that there is no reality by which we are more directly confronted than we are by the Living God.”<sup>116</sup> God, the ground of all being (the possibility for all that is) and all knowledge (the possibility of all knowledge) is a distinct Knowledge who directly confronts humans and known immediately as Thou:

[F]rom the beginning God meets us, not as one among the many objects of our knowledge, but as another Knower by whom both they and we ourselves are known. He is not part of the world we know...rather is He another Knowledge of that world. He confronts us not as an It nor as an inference from all possible Its, but, from the beginning as a Thou. He is not something we find ourselves speaking about, but Some One we find speaking to us and whom we then, in our turn, find ourselves speaking to.<sup>117</sup>

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<sup>115</sup> *IRRT*, p. 50.

<sup>116</sup> *OKG*, p. 166.

<sup>117</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 220.

Baillie's (Buberian-like) conception of God as a Thou reflects Baillie's enduring position that God is Personality. It also reflects Baillie's earlier theological position (*Interpretation of Religion*, 1928) that theological science's interrogation of religious consciousness aims to exhibit the I-Thou relationship via a faithful description and "exhibit[ion]" of religious consciousness' belief content.

In *Our Knowledge of God*, MI describes the divine action of God: God continuously invades humans' field of experience to directly confront human consciousness as a Knowledge immediately known. Maintaining "There is nothing in our experience, which may not be the medium of God's self-revelation",<sup>118</sup> Baillie uses MI to describe how four objectively-existing media in particular (realities), as well as our thought about these four media (truths), do each mediate divine action. Again:

"No one of the four subjects of our knowledge—ourselves, our fellows, the corporeal world, and God—is ever presented to us except in conjunction with all three of the others."

Accordingly, MI maintains that it is "in, with and under" these media that God divinely acts. Furthermore, MI maintains that divine action is mediated "in, with and under" our *knowledge* of and about these realities. This is in keeping with Baillie's distinction between "realities" and "truths", as discussed earlier in the chapter. In short, when Baillie maintains that divine action (and knowledge of Knowledge—i.e., revelation) comes "in, with and under" knowledge of these loci, he is maintaining that divine action (and revelation) comes "in, with and under" *both* our indirect (mediated) propositional knowledge "about" these realities through abstraction (knowledge about "truths"), *and* our direct (immediate) knowledge "of" these objects of our experience by personal acquaintance (knowledge "of" these objects as "realities").

MI, then, describes the mediation of divine action "in, with and under" our discursive knowledge about ("truths") and our non-propositional knowledge (immediate

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<sup>118</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 222.

knowledge) of those realities—this with to describe the nature of the Divine-human interaction—an interaction between Personality and personalities.<sup>119</sup>

## 2.7. MI'S SECOND FUNCTION: A DESCRIPTION OF REVELATION

### 2.7.1. Baillie's Differentiation of Divine Action from Revelation

MI's second function aims to describe revelation, the epistemological ground for all knowledge of God, according to Baillie, throughout his thought.

In *Our Knowledge of God*, Baillie maintains that revelation is always mediated by concrete historical situations; and in the case of MI, we have found Baillie's suggesting that some events are better able to mediate knowledge of God—namely those in which we are keenly aware of our self-knowledge, God-knowledge, other-knowledge and world-knowledge.

Writing almost two decades latter, Baillie continues to emphasize the contextuality of the mediation of divine revelation, and to underscore that some concrete events are epistemologically necessary for the mediation of divine revelation. Of particular importance at present, is Baillie's thought on human co-action in the face of God's Self-disclosure via divine action.

Revelation is always given [sic] us through events; yet not through all events, but only through such as appear to be God's mighty works; and through no event in its bare character or occurrence, but only as men are enabled by the Spirit of God to apprehend and receive its revelatory power.<sup>120</sup>

Clearly, Baillie emphasizes that the apprehension of divine action requires the help of the Spirit of God. Divine action, however, does not insure that divine action becomes revelatory for humans; human co-action is epistemologically necessary for divine action

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<sup>119</sup> In the subsequent division we shall relate this function of mediate immediacy to Baillie's early thought—examine, for instance, MI's parallels with A.S Pringle-Pattison's position that reality is a multi-leveled, gradated valuation field, the knowledge of which is mediated by multiple levels of experience and knowledge types.

<sup>120</sup> *IRRT*, p. 78.

to become revelatory for the individual, even when the Holy Spirit illuminates the human mind:

We must therefore say that the receiving is as necessary to a completed act of revelation as the giving. It is only so far as the action of God in history is understood as God means it to be understood that revelation has place at all. The illumination of the receiving mind is a necessary condition of divine self-disclosure.<sup>121</sup>

We observe, then, that Baillie conceptually differentiates divine action and divine revelation: revelation, unlike divine action, always entails human co-action: God discloses God through God's mighty acts in history; humans, by "illumination" from the Holy Spirit, apprehend events as revelatory and appropriate revelation. Put from a slightly different perspective, if the human correlate—faith's response to divine action—is absent, humans do not have immediate knowledge of God's self-disclosure "in, with and under" human experience. Indeed, save God's gracious invasion of human experience, including those events "in, with and under" which God illuminates the human, "receiving mind", the Christian church itself, a body of believers, would fail to exist:

The truths which Christians believe, the doctrines and dogmas which their Church teaches, are such as they could not be in possession of, if God had not first revealed Himself to his people—revealed His nature and mind and will and the purpose which, conformable to His will, He has in mind for their salvation.<sup>122</sup>

Why does divine action not always guarantee revelation? Baillie's theological anthropology, and theology of God, collectively assert that humans fail to discern

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<sup>121</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 64. Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 104-105.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 34.

historical events as mediating a divine action that conveys God's "nature and mind and will and purpose", because of the limitations of both human nature and God's nature. Regarding the former, the human "receiving apparatus" suffers an imperfect "psychosomatic organization"<sup>123</sup>—hence the epistemological necessity of divine illumination for revelation. Concerning God's nature, God's omnipotence does not override the human mind and will. This too allows for the possibility of a failed apprehension of God's self-disclosure "in, with, and under" human experience, including a failed appropriation of the salvation offered by Christ.<sup>124</sup> It also makes the Holy Spirit's prompting of humans epistemologically necessary for humans' apprehension of certain historical events as mediators of the revelatory content, God.

The diachronic trace provided in the next division will make it apparent that Baillie's epistemological shift<sup>125</sup> in *Our Knowledge of God* introduces neither an idea of revelation entirely foreign to Baillie's early thought nor an idea of revelation that is entirely foreign to MI's logic.<sup>126</sup> Here, we observe that when Baillie finishes his writing career with *The Sense of the Presence of God* (1962), he continues to emphasize the following as epistemologically necessary for divine revelation: it is mediated by concrete historical events; its verification is ultimately contingent upon faith's apprehension of Personality; it can not be logically reduced to any deliverance from discursive or

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<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 34. Cf. *SPG*, p.6

<sup>124</sup> Revelation and salvation cannot have place unless the divine intention to reveal and to save is met by a human acceptance of revelation and salvation which is none the less a free act for all that is divinely inspired. This initiative was always with God. The first move was always His. But his second move depended, as constantly comes out in the narratives, upon the response men were enabled to make to the first. *Ibid.*, p. 68.

<sup>125</sup> It is true that Baillie's earlier, heavily Kantian-influenced thought, and quasi-phenomenological method of "theological science", do de-emphasize the objectivity of the realities supposed by MI to exist. It is also true that Baillie's early thought does not emphasize a doctrine of revelation—i.e., the contextuality of revelation: Baillie's apologetic strategy typically involves the couching of whatever ground is to be found for a distinctively Christian religious experience in a primarily Kantian conception of our moral consciousness of value. Moreover, it is also the case that The Mediator essential to MI is conspicuously absent in epistemologically-oriented major works penned Baillie prior to *Our Knowledge of God's* publication. However, I am not inclined to follow Fergusson, who suggests, albeit carefully avoids, that *Our Knowledge of God*, and MI's inclusion in it, signals Baillie's *epistemological* break with his early thought on knowledge of God, revelation and religious experience.

<sup>126</sup> In Baillie's thought, divine revelation is always mediated by realities and truths (discursive reasoning, be that Kantian practical or pure reasoning, for example) corresponding to them; revelation is always, paradoxically, an immediate knowledge; and immediate knowledge of God, be that revelation in a general sense (moral consciousness of value, or "general revelation"), or a specifically Christian sense (knowledge of Jesus Christ), is always a revelation of Personality (or, Thou), as apprehended by a Holy Spirit-inspired faith.

inferential reasoning; it is qualitatively a non-inferential (immediate) knowledge of God; it requires an illumination of the mind and an apprehension of Divine disclosure by faith (*assensus*), be such knowledge of God a Christian knowledge of God or otherwise.

Baillie adds:

We speak here of faith itself (as distinguished from the many theological propositions which claim to ground themselves upon it) as being a single apprehension, a single disposition of the believing mind...Christian faith...is a single illumination, a single reception of and commitment to the light revealed...[I]t is always faith in the same reality; and its essence is trust in that reality—a trustful commitment leading to obedience to its claims.

...Our faith was born within us through our divining a profounder meaning in certain encountered events than is evident to our ordinary senses.”<sup>127</sup>

Baillie maintains, then, that second-order doctrine (“truths”) can derive from reflective thinking about the first-order immediate knowledge of God (Reality) given in a revelatory event. MI second functions aims to describe faith's operations in humans’ immediate knowledge of (*notitia*), and commitment to (*fiducia*), the Personality known "in, with and under" an event that becomes revelatory, including the paramount Jesus Christ event.

### **2.7.2. MI's Description of Christian Revelation**

MI’s description of a specifically Christian idea of revelation reflects Baillie’s position that while any medium can mediate divine action, God’s self-disclosure as Personality is mediated most profoundly by personalities—namely, by Jesus Christ and by those who have faith in him. This mediation of Personality by personalities is a paradoxically immediate knowledge of Personality’s self-disclosure. The mediated-immediate quality of knowledge of God's being in Jesus Christ comes out in Baillie's description of the historical event and “mediatorship” of “the Mediator”, Jesus Christ.

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<sup>127</sup> *SPG*, pp. 72-73.

The Christian knowledge of God is not given to any man save in conjunction with the telling of an 'old, old, story'. Therefore, it means, lastly, the necessity of Christ, God incarnate in the flesh. . . . The service of others, the fellowship with others, and the historical tradition in which I stand are all media that leads me to the Mediator, and the Mediator leads me to God.

. . . . Clearly, then, the immediacy of God's presence to our soul is a mediated immediacy.<sup>128</sup>

....The kind of directness for which we have contended in our knowledge of God is thus not at all interfered with, but rather is implemented, by the fact of Christ's mediatorship. This is what I have tried to express in the conception of a mediated immediacy. In Christ we know God not by argument but by personal acquaintance. In Christ God comes to us directly.<sup>129</sup>

Here, Baillie emphasizes the necessity of mediated knowledge about divine action in Jesus Christ for Christian faith (i.e., Christian revelation). Specifically, the immediate knowledge of God's being Christ, which can, in turn, give way to faith in Christ (i.e., to specifically Christian revelation), is one mediated by at least four types of "necessity": (1) the ontological necessity of Christ, God incarnate; (2) the epistemological necessity of discursive knowledge about Jesus Christ (an "old, old, story"); (3) the moral necessity of our relations with others (service and fellowship); (4) the historical necessity of one's historical tradition. These media, and our knowledge thereof, in turn, leads us to the Mediator, who comes to us "directly" and is known by "personal acquaintance" (i.e., immediately); and the Mediator, in turn, mediates the "immediacy of God's presence to the soul", bringing one a specifically Christian knowledge of God.<sup>130</sup>

Christian revelation, then, is always knowledge mediated by discursive knowledge about "truths" pertaining to Jesus Christ, though also, and more profoundly, mediated by immediate knowledge of the "reality" of Jesus Christ. These epistemological

<sup>128</sup> *OKG*, pp. 178-181, *passim*.

<sup>129</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 196-197.

<sup>130</sup> "For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Jesus Christ; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time..." *Ibid.*, p. 180.

necessities are both logically and theologically co-extensive with MI's more general epistemology of knowledge of God (i.e., revelation); revelation is always mediated by knowledge about the world (cf. historical tradition), knowledge of others (cf. fellowship and service to others), and knowledge of ourselves (cf. personal acquaintance with Christ).

In light of Baillie's position that God is a Knowledge; that divine disclosure always comes in, with and under historical (space-time) events; that faith (as a mode of apprehension) is, in part, a divining of an event's being revelatory; that revelation, generally speaking, is always a mediated-immediate knowledge of God; that Christian faith is, in Baillie's (hierarchical) form of religious pluralism (discussed below), supreme; we can here conclude of MI's description of revelation that:

MI's logic of revelation describes the Mediator-Event as being God's supreme self-disclosure to human kind: Jesus Christ, in whom "God comes to us directly", albeit, in a mediated (veiled) form, is qualitatively speaking, Knowledge of God par excellence.

MI's description of the supremacy of Christian revelation anticipates Baillie's thought in *The Idea of Revelation in Recent Thought* (1956). There, Baillie indicates that his own moral consciousness mediated to him knowledge of Jesus.

The challenge [to obey God] was mediated to me by my Christian upbringing, and thus through the Christian Church; but its ultimate source was Jesus Christ. The voice I heard was indeed 'the voice of conscience,' but it was a conscience that had a long history behind it, going back to the evangelic story.<sup>131</sup>

In the subsequent division, we will find Baillie forthrightly describing his early childhood knowledge of God as being a MI, and equally contending that family and church relations were formative for his early faith in God.

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<sup>131</sup> *IRRT*, p. 147.



In *The Sense of the Presence of God* (1962), Baillie continues to use the language of mediation to reemphasize that divine revelation is most potent when mediated by personal relations.

Where I find myself in most assured contact with reality is in the relation with God that is mediated to me through my relation with my fellows, and in the relation with my fellows that is mediated to me through my relation with God [emphasis mine].<sup>132</sup>

In that same final work he also reasserts MI's core position that knowledge of other personalities (relations) is essential for the mediation of a Christian knowledge of God. Baillie also emphasizes, as does he with MI, that relations between personalities best mediate revelation are relationships characterized by *agapē*:

In Christian thought, the two great commandments, enjoining the love of God and the love of the neighbour, are related to one another in precisely this way. The way to God passes through my relation to my neighbour, and the way to my neighbour passes through my relationship to God.<sup>133</sup>

Previous research has typically found MI to be important only for Baillie's *Our Knowledge of God* (1939). Here, however, we can already present evidence to the contrary: we have just found that, be it Baillie's description of Christian revelation in *The Idea of Revelation in Recent Thought* (1956) or *The Sense of The Presence of God* (1962)—each underscores the epistemological necessity of *agapē*-like relations with other minds for both the mediation of divine action and for immediate knowledge of the Mediator (i.e., Christian revelation), by personal acquaintance. But does MI contend for

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<sup>132</sup> *SPG*, p. 39.

<sup>133</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 37. Baillie instances I John 4: 20 and Matt. 25: 40, 45 for support. The command to "love one's neighbour as thyself" is a divine command to treat persons as "subjects", not "objects". To objectify persons is to fail to act on "claims" made by God as mediated by one's neighbors. *Ibid.*, 36-37.

the same in *Our Knowledge of God*? In the section titled “A Mediated Immediacy”, Baillie asserts:

But it is equally certain that all our knowledge of God is given us ‘in, with and under’ our knowledge of each other. This means, first, that the knowledge of God is withholden from those who keep themselves aloof from the service of their fellows. It means that “he that loveth not knoweth not God”; whereas “If we love one another, God dwelleth in us”. And this is indeed a blessed provision by which God makes my knowledge of Himself pass through my brother’s need. It means, secondly, that only when I am in fellowship with my fellow men does the knowledge of God come to me individually.<sup>134</sup>

Here we see Baillie emphasizing that Christian revelation is always mediated by knowledge of others, particularly as in the context of *agapē* relations; and that revelation can be “withholden” from those not in such relations (i.e., divine action does not guaranteed revelation). When MI describes Christian revelation as being necessarily mediated by *agapē*, it presupposes that God’s presence is most directly apprehended when humans are engaged in relations characterized by the highest *moral* value known to humankind—*agapē*, for Baillie’s thought. When we have knowledge “of” others as personalities (realities) in the *koinonia* of *agapē* relations—this as opposed to having merely discursive, objectified knowledge “about” them (“truths”)—God, Baillie suggests, dwells within us must fully.

In passing, when Baillie maintains in his latter thought that the Mediator mediates the highest ethical value as yet disclosed to humankind’s moral consciousness—*agapē*—the Baillie of (1939-1960) sounds quite a bit like the Baillie of *The Interpretation of Religion* (1926), who also emphasizes that the Mediator mediates the highest ethical value as yet disclosed to humankind—*agapē*:

Jesus endeavours to lead his contemporaries to the higher thought of God always take the form of an *argumentum a*

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<sup>134</sup> *OKG*, p. 179.

*fortiori*, a ‘How much more...’ His major premise is the assumption that we must think of God in the light of what is best in our human experience, and as being yet better: His minor premise is that what is best in our human experience (our ‘highest social value,’ as our modern jargon would have it) is *agapē*.<sup>135</sup>

### 2.7.3. MI: A Possible Description of Universal Revelation

When MI describes divine revelation as mediated most profoundly by personalities engaged in relations realizing the as-yet, highest known moral value, *agapē*, the concept's function as a description of Christian revelation suggests that it is logically co-extensive with the early mediating theologian's early description of revelation—an idea of revelation which posits universal knowledge of God, as evidenced in, albeit not demonstrated by, humans' moral consciousness of value. Does MI's function as a description of Christian revelation include its being a description of universal revelation? Is MI consistent with Baillie's early thought, despite Baillie's "epistemological shift" in *Our Knowledge of God*?

One way to approach this question is to ask of Baillie's critical thought: what knowledge does all of humankind have about God? Likewise, how do humans get this Knowledge? In his early MT, Baillie's interrogation of religious consciousness leads him to conclude that religious consciousness is organically connected to our moral consciousness of value.

It is not in our own specific animal nature that we find the footprints of Divinity, but only in our nature as moral personalities . . . [I]t is in our human values that we find God revealed . . . Not in the sound of thunder but in the voice of conscience do we hear Him speak most plainly.”<sup>136</sup>

Baillie, then, clearly believes that God reveals God's Self to our moral consciousness of value. And it is exactly here that Baillie's early MT takes odds with Kant's theory of

<sup>135</sup> *IOR*, p. 442. See *ibid.*, pp. 440-42 for Baillie's thought on *agapē* as the highest moral value.

<sup>136</sup> *IOR*, pp. 460-461.

religion. A cursory look at that argument evidences that Baillie would rather have Kant contend for an immediate knowledge of God (i.e., revelation) mediated by our moral consciousness of value.

### 2.7.3.1 Some insight from Baillie's early criticism of Kant

According to Baillie, the primary weakness of Kant's theory of religion concerns Kant's explication of "the exact nature of the transition from the moral to the religious outlook". Kant's failure to elucidate the exact nature of this "determinative connection" "between the beliefs of religion and the utterances of the moral consciousness," is particularly problematic:

Especially there is the question whether it is possible to claim for that transition full logical cogency—whether, that is to say, the fundamental affirmations of faith can be exhibited as strict logical implicates of our recognition of the moral claim upon our wills.

Kant's inadequate description of the epistemology involved in the transition from moral consciousness to religious faith has negative implications for Kant's theory of religion. For one, it threatens to undermine his doctrine of the *summum bonum*—the "central doctrine of all religion". This is because, while right to maintain that humans' have an immediate knowledge—an "immediate certain knowledge" of an *ideal* "I" that initiates the transition from moral to religious consciousness—Kant's thought casts serious doubt upon the knowability of a "real" "moral" universe, as it fails to elucidate the nature of the "determinative connection" that epistemologically conjoins moral and religious consciousness:

Has Kant ever really offered any demonstration that our recognition of duty's claim upon us carries with it the belief that the universe, as moral environment, must be no less ethically constituted than ourselves as moral agents?

Kant has not, maintains Baillie; and he argues that the corrective to Kant must conceive of immediate knowledge as a knowledge mediated by a certain context—namely, one that lays emphasis on God-knowledge:

The judgment-form ‘I ought,’ though indeed it is the very root and type of immediate certain knowledge [emphasis mine], has nevertheless never appeared capable of standing by itself in isolation from some kind of context in the reality to which the ‘I’ in question belongs’.<sup>137</sup>

We find Baillie, then, asserting well before *Our Knowledge of God's* publication, that knowledge of God is an immediate and mediated knowledge: religious faith, he elaborates, is an “immediate certain knowledge” of the “I ought’s” epistemological correspondence to an objectively existing Reality. Such immediate knowledge is mediated by objective knowledge about reality: “immediate certain knowledge does stand in isolation”; it is known in a “context”. What is the nature of that context which mediates immediate knowledge of reality? Baillie's interrogation of the religious consciousness of ordinary persons emphasizes the mediation of Reality by the “moral” context: it is widely believed that humans’ moral consciousness of value mediates immediate knowledge of Reality. Specifically, the religious consciousness of humankind testifies to the widely held belief that moral consciousness is governed by God whom, perceived as Supreme Value, is believed to correspond epistemologically to moral consciousness’ “immediate certain knowledge” of the “I ought”.

Our race as a whole has found it impossible to maintain a religious outlook apart from belief in God. Men have been unable to conceive of reality in any way ‘continuous with their moral consciousness,’ or to realize their own ethical

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<sup>137</sup> Quotes from *IOR*, pp. 272-276 *passim*. Baillie's criticism of Kant's thought in *ROR* and *IOR* focuses primarily on Baillie's interpretation of Kant's thought in Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* (1781) and Kant's *Critique of Practical Reason* (1788). See *IOR*, pp. 259-76, for Baillie's most extensive treatment of Kant's thought—in Baillie's published works (Baillie aborted a doctoral thesis on Kant's thought, when he was a student at Edinburgh).

oneness with it, except by believing it to be under spiritual control.<sup>138</sup>

Consequently, when Kant fails to elucidate the determinative epistemological connection between the moral consciousness out of which religious consciousness (i.e. religious faith) arises, he advances an interpretation of religious consciousness whose description flatly contradicts what the ordinary person believes: that an "I" beyond the "ought" epistemologically connects an organically related religious consciousness with our moral consciousness of value—namely, a Real Value with whom our highest immediately intuited values are believed to correspond: God.

By Baillie's estimation, then, the ordinary person rightly maintains, *contra* Kant, that religious consciousness: (1) entails knowledge of the really real; (2) is not grounded in indirect knowledge (practical reason); (3) possesses a determinative connection with moral consciousness in the form of an activity. This activity, simultaneously a mode of apprehending God and the self-authentication of knowledge of God, is precipitated by a direct knowledge of God: it is called "faith", which "goes beyond" both the immediate knowledge of moral value provided by God in and to the moral consciousness and beyond any ground retroactively provided by inferential reasoning's truth's about (indirect knowledge) the Reality initially and immediately apprehended by revelation (i.e., faith). Indeed,

Our fundamental moral values are given to us directly, and intuited by us directly [emphasis mine]; but for everything in religion that goes beyond this direct intuition of moral value, there is required the activity of *faith*.<sup>139</sup>

The epistemological connection that is the transition from moral consciousness to religious consciousness, then, is an immediate knowledge of God (faith) that is mediated by the moral consciousness of value to which it is organically and epistemologically

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<sup>138</sup> *IOR*, p. 389.

<sup>139</sup> *IOR*, p. 246.

connected. Kant the man, by Baillie's estimation, certainly recognized this;<sup>140</sup> however, Kant *qua* philosopher seems to "waver" on this issue, as evidenced in Kant's excessively "narrow and abstract" interpretation of humans' moral consciousness of value—one whose "legalism" and "formalism" reduce immediate knowledge of God to second-order (indirect) discursive knowledge about a logical implicate. Baillie protests this move,<sup>141</sup> as it conflicts with the ordinary persons' understanding of the same and with the "Pauline truth that those who live by the spirit are dead to the law." Better to contend, Baillie argues, that moral consciousness possesses moral laws that include both commands *and* a prompting to seek out the "highest ideal"—a prompting, that is, which occasions faith's trust in the Reality widely believed to be Self-disclosed in humans' moral consciousness. This, by Baillie's estimation, better describes humankind's testimony to God's universal revelation of God.

### 2.7.3.2 Some insight from Baillie's early criticism of Herrmann's Neo-Kantianism

Baillie's early MT also criticizes Wilhelm Herrmann's (1846-1922) thought, contends for immediate knowledge of God, and provides additional evidence that Baillie uses MI to contend for universal revelation.

When Baillie, in his *The Interpretation of Religion*, criticizes Herrmann's neo-Kantian thought, he focuses primarily on Herrmann's theory of religion, as articulated in Herrmann's *The Communion of the Christian with God*.<sup>142</sup> A marked improvement over Ritschl's neo-Kantian theory,<sup>143</sup> in Herrmann's thought "the process by which Christian

<sup>140</sup> "That the ideal is in some sense the real, that what ought to be will be or is-is not that the very meaning of faith? Surely Kant makes the passage from morality to religion not when he deduces the existence of God from the belief in the objective vindication of goodness but much rather when he passes to the belief in the objective vindication of goodness from the attitude of mere unquestioning obedience." *IOR*, p. 276.

<sup>141</sup> "Surely the real root of our difficulty with Kant lies not in the nature of the bond which he forges between faith and morality but rather in the kind of morality to which religion is thus attached and in terms of which it accordingly comes to be interpreted. If morality means only keeping the commandments—'obedience to the categorical imperative'—we may feel that it provides too narrow a basis for Christian faith to rest upon. But if (as a more adequate ethical theory would instruct us) morality be rather the quest of the highest and most inclusive ideal which it is possible for man to seek after, the case is very different. To envisage moral laws as divine commands is one thing; to envisage the goal of human endeavour as being in line with the eternal purpose of God is a very different thing." *IOR*, p. 274.

<sup>142</sup> Wilhelm Herrmann, *The Communion of the Christian with God*, 3rd English ed., trans. J. Sandys Stanyon, New York: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1913.

<sup>143</sup> Baillie's criticism of Ritschl's thought centers primarily on Ritschl's *The Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation: The Positive Development of the Doctrine*, Vol. 3, T. & T. Clark, 1900.

conviction develops in the soul has never been so faithfully set forth. Nor has there been any more distinguished contribution made to theology in our time than that made by Herrmann....”<sup>144</sup> Baillie also commends Herrmann's theory for its articulation of the mediation of God's self-disclosure: Herrmann's idea of revelation allows, in theory, knowledge of God across religious traditions (i.e., an interrogation of religious consciousness across religious traditions); and, also unlike Ritschl's theory of religion, does justice to the “recognisability of the common Christian experience shared alike by ourselves to-day and the New Testament writers long ago”.<sup>145</sup> Herrmann's idea of revelation notwithstanding, his most distinguished theological contribution is his description of Christian religious experience (hereafter, CRE). It is also his thought's glaring deficiency. Specifically, its (1) unduly “narrow and exclusivistic” description of CRE denies the religious epistemology supposed by Herrmann's method—namely, that a correct description of religious experience, coupled with a theology of divine revelation, could illuminate religion's essence. Secondly, it (2) ambiguously describes the epistemological connection between moral consciousness and religious consciousness, as evidenced in Herrmann's ambiguous elucidation of: (a) the content of religious knowledge which mediates assent to Christian religious faith; (b) the epistemological connection between Christian religious faith and non-Christian religious faith. These ambiguities (a-b), in turn, suffer from “one critical point that does not satisfy . . . that Christian faith in God ‘rests upon two object facts’—the historical fact of Jesus and the fact of our consciousness of duty's claim.”<sup>146</sup> Specifically, Herrmann's epistemology of religious experience expresses uncertainty on how revelation mediates religious experience.

‘We may have the revelation of the being of God quite apart from Jesus, but . . . Jesus makes some addition to that revelation, as, for example, the knowledge that God has a Son and constitutes one Being with Him . . .  
 . . . . [But] we by no means wish to assert, even for a moment, that the savages of New Holland have no

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<sup>144</sup> *IOR*, p. 296.

<sup>145</sup> *IOR*, p. 56.

<sup>146</sup> *IOR*, p. 296.



knowledge of God, no pulsations of true religion, and therefore no communion with God. But we do not know through what medium such knowledge and such communion reach them. We cannot enter fully into the religious life even of a pious Israelite, for the facts which worked upon them as revelation have no longer force for us . . . ' [emphasis mine].<sup>147</sup>

Jesus, then, is said to mediate a revelation co-extensive with, though qualitatively distinct from, general revelation—this by making “some addition” to non-Christian knowledge of God. This mysterious “addition” in knowledge which, via the Jesus-human encounter, mediates Christian faith, is said to be, in turn, mediated by another medium—an epistemological connection between Christian revelation and a more general revelation, about whose nature “we do not know”. All of this is problematic for Baillie

When Baillie centers his argument on Herrmann’s description of the mediation of divine revelation, he attacks Herrmann's description of how a specifically Christian faith develops in the soul—namely, how “some addition” mediates Christian knowledge of God and prompts trust in Jesus Christ (i.e., CRE).<sup>148</sup> Herrmann rightly maintains that Jesus' life is the historical fact upon which Christianity should focus—an advance on Ritschl’s “narrow Lutheran Christocentrism”<sup>149</sup> Herrmann also correctly recognize that faith in the Mediator is in some sense an immediate knowledge: ‘The faith which is religion is not assent to propositions but is, in words of Herrmann’s “nothing else than trust in persons and in the powers of personal life.”’<sup>150</sup>

Still, language's limitations—that it can neither exhaust the historical fact of Jesus, nor the nature of divine-human encounter, nor the immediate certitude that Christian faith “undeniably contains”—do not warrant Herrmann’s epistemological

<sup>147</sup> Herrmann, *Communion with God*, p. 62. Cited in *IOR*, p. 57.

<sup>148</sup> Herrmann's description provides fodder for Baillie's criticism: ‘If we now ask, “How is it possible that so mighty an utterance should be spoken to us in the fact that Jesus stands before us as an undeniable part of what is real to ourselves? or, “How can this fact become for us the intimation wherein God discloses Himself to us in His reality and Power?” these answers can be answered only by the fact itself, and by what it undeniably contains.’ Herrmann, *Communion with God*, pp. 83-84. Cited in *IOR*, p. 295.

<sup>149</sup> Though Ritschl rightly affirms Herrmann’s own Lutheran position that Christ is the Mediator of knowledge of God—“that,” in Baillie’s words, “the faith of Christians is altogether grounded in an experience mediated through Jesus Christ.”

<sup>150</sup> Herrmann, *Communion with God*, p. 228. Cited in *IOR*, p. 378.

reduction of the organic epistemological connection between moral consciousness and religious consciousness to the "historical fact of Jesus". Moreover, such an epistemological maneuver would foreclose unduly on Herrmann's otherwise excellent description of CRE, as: (1) the description of the historical fact of Jesus—but one “antecedent of faith”—is not illuminating; (2) it is unclear how said "fact", the vaguely described impression that it makes on humans' moral consciousness included, mediates moral consciousness' assent to a CRE—one with which it is, again, (somehow) epistemologically connected. Indeed, Herrmann's description of CRE (3) introduces grave doubt about how “such an impression made by Jesus upon us . . . gives us grounds for believing that a God is here acting upon us through the medium of his historical memory.”

According to Baillie, then, Herrmann's description of the epistemology religious experience and revelation is essentially vacuous: Christian faith is (somehow) mediated by a divine encounter with a Mediator who (somehow) engages humans' moral consciousness of value with (some) "impression" to bring one, via cognitive insight, into a qualitatively more profound communion with the universally-known God.

How might one better describe revelation, religious consciousness, moral consciousness and their epistemic relations? Baillie maintains that a description of Christian faith's development in the soul should emphasize that assent to religious consciousness is mediated by discursive reasoning—that which Herrmann marginalizes, in his rather vague description of the mediation of religious experience:

It is . . . a serious question whether Herrmann, by thus refusing that the final step leading to faith can be represented as an *act of intelligent insight*, has not in effect robbed faith altogether of that connection with the objective world which he had been at such points to give it. He has broken the chain of reason at a critical point; and when we proceed beyond that point, are we not as surely loosed from our moorings in objectivity as if the chain had never been forged?<sup>151</sup>

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<sup>151</sup> *IOR*, p. 296. Baillie's italicized emphasis.

Accordingly, the superior description of the "historical fact of Jesus" will elucidate how assent to Christian religious consciousness (i.e., Christian revelation) is mediated by an "act of intelligent insight"—itself an act mediated by one's encounter with the "antecedent of faith" (Jesus) whose "impression", in and to moral consciousness, both mediates and prompts assent to Christian religious consciousness (i.e., *fiducia*). Such an emphasis on the epistemological necessity of intelligent insight will go far toward improving upon Herrmann's description of CRE. Indeed, when Herrmann denies that Christian religious consciousness is mediated by an act of intelligent insight, he (4) "breaks the chain of reason" between Christian moral and religious consciousness as well as (5) fractures the epistemological connection between Christian religious consciousness and the other "antecedent of faith" —"the fact of our consciousness of duty's claim"—each of which mediates the assent from humankind's moral consciousness of value to Christian religious consciousness. Consequently, Herrmann's thought fails to explain lucidly how moral consciousness' epistemological connection to Christian religious consciousness occasions CRE (faith in Jesus Christ via divine revelation). The absence of this epistemological linkage not only compromises the cogency Herrmann's description of CRE; it invariably (6) undermines Herrmann's would-be attempt at a theology of general revelation. The superior description of CRE, then, will overcome deficiencies (1-6).

It is also clear that Baillie is, even with his early Kantian and neo-Kantian-indebted thought, contending for the following epistemological positions: (a) knowledge of God is an immediate knowledge; (b) immediate knowledge of God is mediated by one's historical context (e.g., knowledge about the historical fact of Jesus Christ); (c) knowledge of God is always a matter of revelation; (d) Divine Love is the highest value known to moral consciousness; (e) a conceptually integrated moral consciousness and religious consciousness, be it construed either theologically (theology of revelation) or by its correlate empirical methodology (a quasi-phenomenology of religious experience)—and that all of this mediates, or makes way for the coming of, faith in the Mediator—the one in whom God most supremely acts—the one in whom Divine Love and Goodness is most fully realized.

### 2.7.3.3 MI in Light of Baillie's early criticism of Kant and Herrmann

Does MI, then, describe universal revelation? Prior research has not maintained that it has; I have already presented evidence that it does. For one, there is Baillie's just-mentioned prescription (1-6) for a superior description of CRE (i.e., Christian revelation): it will emphasize that CRE is mediated by intelligent insight. MI's description of CRE straightforwardly emphasizes that and propositions (1-6), if not without its own logical difficulties. We have also found Baillie criticizing Herrmann's epistemology for espousing an unduly narrow conceptualization of the scope of divine action, revelation and religious experience—on, again, grounds (1-6). Given that MI's epistemology does endeavor to meet challenges (1-6), and that MI's logic does uphold the core of Baillie's early epistemology (a-e), it stands to reason that MI is also a response to Herrmann's allegedly deficient description of God's revelation of God's Presence in and to all persons—a mainstay position throughout Baillie's scholarly thought. Indeed, we have Baillie using the language of mediation and immediacy to contend that what is “written in the hearts” of humankind is something of the “nature, mind, will and purpose” of God is epistemologically connected to a specifically Christian revelation. To be sure, Baillie does not overtly indicate in *The Idea of Revelation in Recent Thought* (1956) that humans' moral consciousness recognize in Jesus God's Supreme disclosure of Value; nevertheless, Baillie does lay it down that God manifests God in and to the moral consciousness of all humans—namely, such that humans know that: (1) they “owe” God; (2) an evil pervades humans' “inner” and “outer worlds”; (3) God is the One who delivers humans from exigency.<sup>152</sup> How does God deliver humans from the throes to which moral consciousness universally testifies? Addressing the situation of human exigency, Baillie submits: “The fullness of revelation is *only* in Jesus Christ, and in Him all other revelation is comprehended and summed up.”<sup>153</sup> Clearly, then, Baillie's idea of special revelation presupposes an epistemological connection with moral consciousness; and moral consciousness, according to Baillie, mediates its assent to Christian faith: having privy to God's Self-disclosure in and to it, moral consciousness facilitates humans'

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<sup>152</sup> *IRRT*, Ch. 3.

<sup>153</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 80. Baillie's italicized emphasis.

recognition in Jesus God's supreme self-disclosure and deliverance from the evil that pervades humans' inner and outer worlds.

It is Baillie's *Our Knowledge of God*, however, which provides the best evidence that MI's function as description of revelation extends beyond its description of specifically Christian revelation to an affirmation of Baillie's idea of general revelation. Therein, Baillie contends, as does he throughout his thought, that all humans have knowledge of God. In keeping with both his early and latter thought, Baillie specifically maintains that, firstly, all humans have *a priori* moral "conceptions" of God's divine attributes. *A priori* knowledge that is no mere knowledge about "an impersonal realm of *a priori* moral essences", it is rather *a priori* moral conception of God as Personality. To this Baillie adds:

What is true of personality is true of goodness... infinity, eternity, omniscience, and omnipotence. All these conceptions we do certainly possess, yet it is clear that we do not find them in ourselves or anywhere in the created world...It must be that we have some direct knowledge of Another who is Uncreated and in whom these qualities inhere. Such qualities are known, not *a posteriori* but *a priori*; which is to say, being interpreted, that they are first seen not on earth but in heaven. They are the names and attributes which we find in God (emphases mine).<sup>154</sup>

Baillie's position in *Our Knowledge of God*, then, is that all humans have a "direct" (immediate) knowledge of God mediated by *a priori* knowledge ("conceptions") about God's attributes. This immediate knowledge, Baillie goes on to say, includes knowledge of God's "perfections" and "ideals" as well as knowledge of the "ontological predicates" of God's attributes, namely God's "immutability," "omniscience", and "omnipresence". These essences are "first discovered by us in the divine Reality that confronts us . . ." <sup>155</sup> Is such universal knowledge of God, situated in moral consciousness, inborn-innate

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<sup>154</sup> *OKG*, pp. 251-252.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*, 258. "He who know the poverty of his personality knows it only because there has first been revealed to him the perfect personality of God." *Ibid.*

knowledge? Put slightly differently, is it a directly immediate knowledge of God—one that bypasses mediation by human sensory experience? Baillie makes it clear that universal knowledge of God is immediate knowledge mediated by human experience, albeit a knowledge whose ground ultimately does not reduce to (can be verified by) a posteriori truths: God ultimately verifies knowledge of God.

We see, then, that when MI describes Christian revelation in *Our Knowledge of God* as mediated by the highest value known by moral consciousness, *agapē*, it describes revelation in a manner consistent with Baillie's interpretation of the content of humans' moral consciousness. One might rightly say that, in effect, to gaze upon the Mediator is to gaze upon the Supreme Value of whom the moral consciousness already has some knowledge by faith (*notitia*). Baillie's line of reasoning here corroborates his view that the apologist's language should be, as we have seen, primarily evocative, and never demonstrative, in methodological orientation: one need not prove what (Whom) is already known.<sup>156</sup>

Furthermore, when MI describes a specifically Christian knowledge of God as mediated by our knowledge of personalities, it presupposes that moral consciousness is epistemologically necessary for human history's mediation of knowledge of God's being in Jesus Christ. When speaking, for instance, of Christian revelation as MI, Baillie indicates that

We have to face the fact that we have to do here with an experience [mediated immediacy] of an entirely unique kind, its uniqueness lying precisely in this conjunction of immediacy with mediacy—that is, in the fact that God reveals Himself to me only through others who went before, yet in so doing reveals himself to me now.<sup>157</sup>

How can knowledge of God be mediated by mere historical knowledge or information about persons—indeed, by persons whom one has never encountered in a concrete

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<sup>156</sup> As Baillie maintains that Cook Wilson rightly perceives.

<sup>157</sup> *OKG*, p. 185.

historical situation? MI's description of persons' mediation of knowledge of God across history presupposes that knowledge "about" a person's thought (truths) can mediate knowledge "of" their personality (reality), and that knowledge of that personality can mediate knowledge "of" the Personality disclosed in and to that personality. As Baillie puts it: "When God speaks to us in the Epistle, it is *at the same time* St. Paul who speaks to us. St. Paul's thinking is not extinguished, but is rather at its best, when God is most plainly thinking in him [emphasis mine]." <sup>158</sup>

Although the mediation of knowledge of Christ by other minds may prove problematic for MI's logic, <sup>159</sup> when MI describes Personality thinking in a personality, its epistemology does suppose that when the human *qua* personality encounters the Gospel message in a concrete situation, such a personality can have, by personal acquaintance, a knowledge of those other minds (e.g., Gospel writers) said to mediate divine action. Such mediation of divine action "in, with and under" the trans-historical fellowship of other minds, coupled with the "human correlate", faith (*fiducia*), helps to enable that Gospel message to become a Christian "revelatory situation"—i.e., enables, via mediated knowledge about the Gospel, immediate knowledge of God's being in Christ, including faith's response in the individual's *hic et nunc*. <sup>160</sup> When MI's epistemology describes such historical mediation of such a Christian revelatory situation, it emphasizes to things which are, on Baillie's analysis, not emphasized by Herrmann's epistemology: (1) not all mediation of Christian knowledge of God is limited to the Christian tradition's interpretation of the historical fact of Jesus; (2) faith in Jesus is mediated by the moral consciousness in and to which God is self-disclosed. <sup>161</sup>

We see, then, that MI's second function is primarily a description of Christian revelation—that is, a description of faith's trust in the Mediator, the paramount and, paradoxically, Mediated (flesh)-Immediate (spirit) Knowledge of God. When MI's description of the epistemology of divine revelation places the Mediator-Event at the

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<sup>158</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 236.

<sup>159</sup> As examined in Chapter 8.

<sup>160</sup> "All the history that has Presence in it for me, all the history that has anything to say to me, all of the past through which I am addressed in the present, is centered in the story of the Cross," *OKG*, p. 186. Cf. *IRRT*, pp. 104-08, where Baillie emphasizes the here-and-nowness of revelation—an aspect of immediacy of knowledge of God which finds increasing emphasis in Baillie's MT in *OKG*, and is central to MI's epistemology.

<sup>161</sup> Please see next section's reference to MI's autobiographical basis for evidence for (1-2).

center of Christian faith, it describes how various knowledges (e.g., ourselves, others, the world) mediate knowledge of the Mediator who most profoundly points humanity toward God. It also presupposes that the Mediator is the personification of our highest ethical value—*agapē*. In doing so, MI describes Christian revelation as mediated by knowledge of God's action "in, with and under" a concrete history that mediates religious consciousness' reflexive action upon, and linguistic interpretation of, moral consciousness' latent belief that Personality is revealed (i.e., known immediately) in a Divine-human encounter, between Personality and personalities, in and to humans' moral consciousness of value. This includes MI's description of God's action in the Mediator—the paradigm event the knowledge about and of which is mediated by mediated-immediate knowledge of other minds—supra-sensory personalities whom, like God, are not ontologically reducible to bodies. Such mediation is particularly adept at mediating knowledge of God when personalities engage fellow personalities in relations characterized by *agapē*.

Although MI's description of revelation is primarily concerned with the epistemology of a specifically Christian knowledge of God, when it describes Christian revelation as immediate knowledge of the Mediator through personal acquaintance, its description conceives of faith in the Mediator as being a more particularized, and profoundly more illuminating, instanced knowledge of the God, the Self-disclosure of Whom is already known (*notitia*) universally via the medium of human moral consciousness. With regard to non-Christian religious consciousness (i.e., general revelation), MI's description of Christian revelation likewise conceives of Christian knowledge of God as being a more profound and instanced knowledge of Subject in Whom the religious consciousness of "ordinary persons" have put their trust (*fidelucia*).

The extent to which MI's function as a description of revelation extends beyond a description of Christian revelation to a description of universal revelation requires an examination of MI's function as within the more dynamic context of Baillie's MT (next division). Nonetheless, MI is surely that concept with which Baillie would epistemologically forge a link between his idea of Christian revelation and his idea of general or universal revelation. As such, we already have evidence to suggest that prior research has underestimated MI's importance for Baillie's critical thought as a whole.



## 2.8. MI'S THIRD FUNCTION: A DESCRIPTIVE EPISTEMOLOGY OF CHRISTIAN RELIGIOUS EXPERIENCE

We see that Baillie's MT maintains that God objectively exists; that God is in Jesus Christ; that faith in Jesus Christ is Christian saving faith; that faith in Jesus Christ places the Christian in a deeper fellowship with God than was previously the case—and that all of this knowledge of God is mediated by human experience, though God be immediately known. We have also seen that the veridicality of this mediated-immediate knowledge is ultimately established by God's self-authenticating revelation, which MI describes.

Baillie was not inclined to proclaim these and other theological truths, when in apologetic mode, however. He certainly did not assert *tout court* that revelation provides the basis for our understanding of all of God's action. Rather, when Baillie engaged the intellectual currents of his time, his tendency, in keeping with his mediating theological method, was to engage such currents on more neutral ground. For Baillie *qua* apologist, this often included his taking a more empirical approach toward the would-be reconciliation of an issue—this often with appeal to some aspect of shared experience—to correlate that aspect with his theology, and then persuade that the theological explanation is the superior explanation. It is with this correlative approach in mind that we now turn to MI's third function: Baillie's attempt to describe an empirically-based epistemology of religious experience in a way that correlates with his theology of divine revelation (i.e., MI's description of revelation).

Baillie's MT does also use MI to describe the cognitive-psychological phenomena involved in religious consciousness' experience—a point routinely overlooked in the scholarly criticism of MI. Specifically, this third function of MI endeavors to describe what *seems*, to the subject, to be involved in what appears, to the subject, to be divine revelation in Christ. In this respect, MI tries to describe what Proudfoot calls the “phenomenological immediacy” of CRE.<sup>162</sup> I shall prefer the language of “descriptive epistemology” to refer to MI's function as a description of CRE.<sup>163</sup>

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<sup>162</sup> In his own analysis of religious experience, Wayne Proudfoot identifies two types of immediacy, when examining Schleiermacher's concept of immediacy: the “phenomenological immediacy” of religious experience and the “theoretical immediacy” of religious experience. Phenomenological immediacy refers

In *Our Knowledge of God*, Baillie uses MI to describe the perception and cognition involved in assent to belief in Jesus Christ, in particular. I have already covered much of that ground with my look at MI's description of revelation, and need not repeat that description here. The major difference to note here is that, whereas MI's function as a description of divine revelation theologically presupposes that faith, the mode of apprehending God, provides actual knowledge of God in Jesus Christ by personal acquaintance, MI's function as a description of CRE describes the phenomena by which moral consciousness transitions into Christian religious consciousness, according to what seems to the subject to be saving faith in the Mediator. A function of MI which mirrors the early mediating theologian's belief that theological science should interrogate and accurately describe religious consciousness, this function of MI, more particularly still, describes the cognition involved in moral consciousness' assent to belief in Jesus Christ, according to how God seems to be known in Jesus Christ.

This is a novel interpretation of MI, to my knowledge. It is not without support: the primary basis for it is Baillie's own autobiography—itsself the basis for much of Baillie's epistemology in *Our Knowledge of God*. That autobiography is discussed in detail in the next chapter; here, I note only that when Baillie does argue for MI, his first move is to appeal to his own experience of God as support. An experience of God which Baillie will be found to describe as a "mediated immediacy", Baillie epistemologically ties his experience of God-as-MI to what seems to him to have been his childhood moral consciousness of value (using axiological-loaded words like "owed", "ought", "conscience", the sweetness and "rebuke" of the message of Jesus; that Jesus was somehow the "authority" which "confronted" him). Moreover, we shall also find Baillie maintaining that knowledge of God-as-MI is an experience shared by all humans, in at

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to a description of "how an emotion or experience seems to the subjects as an account of what must be assumed in order to have such an experience." Theoretical immediacy refers to how an emotion or experience is an account of what must be assumed in order to have such a religious experience. Wayne Proudfoot, *Religious Experience*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1985, p. 19. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 3. <sup>163</sup> Proudfoot's language of "phenomenological immediacy" connotes two epistemological aspects that are inconsistent with MI and could perplex the reader: (1) that Baillie employed a strictly phenomenological method for studying religious experience; (2) that Baillie's was a phenomenalist account of CRE. Regarding the former, Fergusson has rightly noted that Baillie employed a quasi-phenomenological approach and that this approach pertains only to Baillie's thought prior to *OKG*. See Fergusson, "Orthodox Liberal".

least one respect.<sup>164</sup> An epistemological and apologetic move co-extensive with Baillie's epistemology of universal revelation, it is also consistent with MI's plausible attempt to integrate Baillie's descriptions of universal revelation and Christian revelation.

There is additional evidence to indicate that Baillie employs MI as an empirically-based description of the cognitive psychology involved in religious experience. For example, there is Baillie's ground for the other-knowledge and world-knowledge that constitute two of MI's four types of knowledge (along with self-knowledge and God-knowledge): it does not derive primarily from a theology of revelation; rather, Baillie appeals to philosophical and psychological reflection as ground for how the mind seems to perceive the world and others.<sup>165</sup>

In passing, inasmuch as the proper aim of Christian apologetics is to facilitate conscious reflection upon a latent knowledge of God thought available to all humans, MI's hitherto neglected function as a description of religious experience may hold promise as a contemporary apologetic construct.

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<sup>164</sup> "Clearly, then the immediacy of God's presence is a mediated immediacy. But I must now do what I can to solve the apparent self-contradictoriness of this phrase.... What I must do is ask myself how knowledge of God first came to me. And here I can only repeat what was said in the opening pages of this book: unless my analysis of my memory is altogether at fault, the knowledge of God that first came to me in the form of an awareness that I was 'not my own' but under authority, one who 'owed' something, one who 'ought' to be something which he was not. But whence did this awareness come to me?" Baillie then indicates that his parents' language and behavior mediated to him his earliest awareness of God. The story of particular importance for the mediation of knowledge of God in this "spiritual climate" was the story of Jesus: "And I knew that was somehow the source of the authority with which I was confronted. I could not hear a Bible story read without being aware in it I was somehow being confronted with a solemn presence that had in it both a sweetness and rebuke. Nor do I remember a day when I did not already dimly know that this presence was God." Baillie continues: "The story told me how God had spoken to Abraham and Moses and the prophets and Apostles, but what gave the story power over my imagination and conscience was the knowledge that 'in, with and under' this speaking to these others of long ago He was now also speaking to me." He then explicitly ties his personal experience of God to his idea of mediated immediacy: "And we have to face the fact that we have to do here with an experience of an entirely unique kind, its uniqueness lying precisely in this conjunction of immediacy with mediacy—that is, in the fact that God reveals Himself to me only through others who went before, yet in so doing reveals himself to me now." This was Baillie's experience, to best of his memory, of how God "used these media" to "reveal Himself to [Baillie]; 'my' emphasized] soul." By Baillie's estimation, is he the only one to have experienced the immediacy of God in the present by the mediation of others from the past? "Mysterious though it be, it is a mystery with which all men have had acquaintance." *OKG*, pp. 181-186, *passim*.

<sup>165</sup> See *Ibid.*, section 17, pp. 201-218.

## **2.9. MI'S FOURTH FUNCTION: A NORMATIVE EPISTEMOLOGY OF KNOWLEDGE OF GOD**

We have found MI's first three functions to be primarily descriptive—descriptions of divine action, revelation, and CRE. MI also functions as a normative epistemology in Baillie's MT. To say that MI's fourth function is a "normative epistemology", as opposed to a "descriptive epistemology", is to move beyond a description of the processes involved in what seems to be knowledge of God (descriptive epistemology), to the position that it is reasonable to think that such description evidences actual knowledge of God.

When Baillie uses MI in this capacity, he argues that knowledge of God is somewhat analogous to knowledge of human minds: each is a mediated immediacy. Specifically, each is a mediated knowledge of a mind, in that each comes "in, with and under" the corporeal world and our inferential knowledge "about" that world; each is, however, paradoxically an immediate knowledge of a mind ontologically irreducible to the corporeal matter each embodies: Mediating by second-order, discursive knowledge ("truths") about corporeal realities, knowledge of human minds, like knowledge of God, is a non-discursive knowledge "of" "realities" ("minds" or "personalities") whose existence is often thought to transcend the material order. MI, when functioning in its somewhat limited capacity as a normative epistemology, is not a proof for God's existence, based on knowledge of human minds: knowledge of God is always a matter of revelation, according to Baillie, and never an inference. Accordingly, this function of MI does not suppose that analogies between knowledge of God and knowledge of other realities can be established from, in Baillie's words, "the human end": God is the ground of all being and knowledge, according to Baillie; and all analogies, imperfect though they must be, must begin with God, who has logical priority over all realities and truths, and be evaluated to the extent that such realities correspond to God's self-revelation.

MI's function as a normative epistemology does function as a safeguard of sorts for Baillie's Christian apologetic: it is a construct which Baillie wields as a defense against epistemologies which reject as meaningless knowledge of God, on the ground that such talk admits of knowledge of a supra-sensible mind. Specifically, Baillie employs MI to contend that, inasmuch as knowledge of persons (or minds) is admitted as

a truth statement in epistemological debate, knowledge of Personality (Mind) cannot be rejected on the ground that it too contends for knowledge of a supra-sensible reality. One might say that, in this regard, Baillie uses MI to argue for a position not unlike, for example, Plantinga and Alston's position for the proper basicity of belief in God.

## **2.10. CONCLUSION**

My conclusion for this chapter is that MI serves four functions for Baillie's MT: (1) a description of divine action; (2) a description of divine revelation; (3) a descriptive epistemology of CRE; (4) a normative epistemology of knowledge of God. My interpretation is, to my knowledge, original: prior research has tended to identify merely two of MI's functions, as evidenced in its collective criticism of MI.

## **DIVISION 2 : MI'S DEVELOPMENT IN BAILLIE'S MEDIATING THEOLOGY**

### **3. JOHN BAILLIE: A MEDIATING THEOLOGIAN IN-THE-MAKING**

This second division of the thesis, to which we now turn, provides the groundwork necessary for the resolution of the second major research issue presently facing John Baillie scholarship: MI's importance for Baillie's MT. It does so by elucidating and diachronically tracing the autobiographical and intellectual influences which shaped the development and focus of Baillie's MT. Operating within this broader social-intellectual context, the division brings to the fore MI's development in Baillie's evolving MT. It is found that MI's importance for Baillie's MT has been severely underestimated by previous research.

#### **3.1. AN INTRODUCTION TO BAILLIE'S MEDIATING THEOLOGY: ITS CHALLENGES AND HOW THEY WILL BE OVERCOME**

Any attempt to order, to understand and to evaluate Baillie's MT must overcome a host of challenges. For one, unconventional lines of thinking would appear to run rampantly throughout it. J.K. Mozley touches on this issue, when, writing over half a century ago, he warns that

Dr. Baillie is, indeed, a singularly independent thinker, and both those who read him now, and those who will be in the position someday to assess the value of his work as a Christian theologian, must not expect to follow his expositions as though he were taking them along familiar routes.<sup>166</sup>

To compound matters, Baillie's unfamiliar expositions found him engaging several intellectual currents, as we have seen. Furthermore, Baillie's wide-ranging theology is not systematically elucidated. Fergusson, for example, notes that Baillie's was a non-systematic theology, and thinks it better to label Baillie's MT as a "reactive"

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<sup>166</sup> John Kenneth Mozley, *Some Tendencies in British Theology* (London: S.P.C.K., 1951), p. 149.

theology<sup>167</sup>—one, that is, whose doctrines were articulated in the context of Baillie’s mediation amongst a host of any number of intellectual currents. As Newlands puts it, “John Baillie’s work does not read like a timeless *Summa*. Indeed, it could not, because it quite deliberately addresses current intellectual issues with a sympathetic sensitivity to their own agenda.”<sup>168</sup> Power, writing earlier still, likens Baillie’s non-systematically elucidated thought to a poet’s musings.<sup>169</sup> Furthermore, Baillie’s most creative, and perhaps most fruitful, thought appears to be disjointed at times.<sup>170</sup> Indeed, it is on such occasions that one finds evidence for possibly the “outstanding weakness” of Baillie’s MT, its plausibly incoherent language about revelation.<sup>171</sup>

There are, then, several challenges that accompany an attempt to understand Baillie’s MT and MI’s importance for it. These demand a research method that can, at minimum: (1) effectively order Baillie’s expansive MT; (2) astutely follow the logic of Baillie’s often unconventional arguments as such; (3) diachronically track and order Baillie’s dynamic, “reactive”, and, at times, dynamically changing, theological development; (4) judiciously evaluate any would-be potential value of that MT’s doctrines and concepts (i.e., MI<sup>172</sup>), by subjecting them to criticism from the very areas

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<sup>167</sup> Fergusson, “Orthodox Liberal”, p. 123.

<sup>168</sup> *Transatlantic Theology*, p. 310.

<sup>169</sup> “It may be safe to say that Baillie was not a systematic thinker, if by that one means a person who constructs an architeonic system in which all of the structure comes together in a well proportioned whole. Baillie wrote more like a poet, and his style was impressionistic.” William L. Power, *The Knowledge of God, the Nature of God, and the Function of Theological Language in the Theology of John Baillie*. Emory University Doctoral Dissertation, 1965, p. 158.

<sup>170</sup> Fergusson, for example, appears to find a positive correlation between the number of intellectual currents amongst which Baillie is mediating and the incomprehensibility of Baillie’s latter thought (in particular). When, for example, Baillie expands his dialoguing partners in *Our Knowledge of God* (1939), so as now to engage Barth’s thought with increased depth of expression, Baillie’s now “increasingly creative” theology becomes one increasingly plagued by “disjointed” arguments. Such disjointed logic is said to occur in Baillie’s thought on revelation and religious experience in particular—that is, as concerning doctrines of central importance to MI. If so, here is a challenge for an understanding of the *Our Knowledge of God* that is of pivotal importance for MT’s development (and, presumably, a challenge for understanding the concept of MI featured in that work). See Fergusson, “Orthodox Liberal”, p. 140. Here also is some rather delicious irony: if Fergusson’s analysis is correct, then Baillie’s apologetic is often considered to be the most profound, when its arguments are the most disjointed: *Our Knowledge of God*, we have found, is widely considered to be Baillie’s most outstanding contribution to mid-twentieth Christian apologetics!

<sup>171</sup> “Orthodox Liberal”, p. 146.

<sup>172</sup> Division Three’s eventual evaluation of MI does exactly that, by following research method prescriptions (1-4). Its evaluation of both MI’s logic and its possible contemporary-Christian-theological value, for instance, subjects MI to advances in Christian theology (as pertaining to immediate knowledge of God) and in the area of the philosophy of religion (especially as concerning the veridicality of immediate knowledge), including the phenomenology of religious experience (particularly as concerning the

and disciplines to which the mediating theologian often appealed (e.g., philosophy, psychology) as support for the cogency of his theological content. Here is no small task

Fortunately, research has suggested promising in-roads for meeting challenges (1-4). For example, even if Baillie's MT is broad in scope, creative in articulation, reactive in method and occasionally disjointed in argumentation; Baillie's theological corpus demonstrates a sustained focus on two problems in particular—throughout its development: the problems of knowledge of God and revelation.<sup>173</sup> Consequently, Baillie's MT does divulge a promising conceptual structure for the ordering and diachronic tracing of much of its development—one that focuses on Baillie's thought on knowledge of God and revelation. That such a diachronic trace readily lends itself to the resolution of the major research issue at hand, MI's importance for Baillie's MT, adds to the method's promise. For how important is MI for Baillie's thought on the problems of knowledge of God and revelation? To recall Klinefelter, MI is "the cornerstone of Baillie's epistemology of religion and ... crucial for his doctrine of revelation".<sup>174</sup> Our examination of MI in the previous chapter has already gone a long way toward corroborated the truth of that statement. Klinefelter and Macquarrie, then, suggest a promising means for meeting the present challenge—the systematic ordering and tracking of Baillie's MT's doctrinal-conceptual development over a roughly 35-year period: here is a means for the delimitation of an otherwise imposingly broad research scope, and a means for a sustained focus on MI's particular historical and conceptual development—essentials for the assessment of MI's importance for Baillie's MT as a whole.

Turning now to the development of Baillie's thought, I will employ a method which, thus: (a) traces diachronically Baillie's theological development on these problems (revelation, knowledge of God); (b) adds additional order to the trace, via the inclusion of two problems also featured (at various times) in Baillie's philosophical-theological development (his Christology; his idea of religious experience); (c) situates (both chronologically and logically) MI within the dynamic stream of that evolution; (d) elucidates its conceptual integration with, and implications for, the (now) four doctrines

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immediacy of CRE)—areas to which the mediating theologian appealed in support for MI's value for the Christian thought of his own day.

<sup>173</sup> John Macquarrie, *Twentieth Century Religious Thought*, (London: SCM Press, Ltd., 1963), p. 340.

<sup>174</sup> Klinefelter, "Our Knowledge of God", pp. 402-403.



which constitute the focus of his MT; and, subsequently, (e) assesses the concept's importance for Baillie's MT—all this with the aim to realize my research aims (2) and objectives (2).

What works are essential to understanding Baillie's thought on the problems of knowledge of God and revelation in particular? Of Baillie's major works, three—*The Interpretation of Religion* (1929), *Our Knowledge of God* (1939), and *The Sense of the Presence of God* (1962)—are regularly consulted in expositions and critiques of Baillie's thought on the problems of knowledge of God and revelation. The primary major sources examined in this division, they are, furthermore, widely considered Baillie's three most substantial scholarly works. Important also for understanding the development of Baillie's thought on knowledge of God and revelation are his less substantive *The Roots of Religion in the Human Soul* (1926) and *The Idea of Revelation in Recent Thought* (1956). This division's diachronic trace of Baillie's MT's development also consults these works in its exposition of Baillie's thought on revelation, knowledge of God and MI, in particular.

My scheme for the division is to divide Baillie's thought into two periods: Baillie's "early" (1926-1938) and "latter" (1939-1960) MT. My rationale for this division also derives from both prior research observations and my present research objectives. For instance, while literature on Baillie's intellectual development<sup>175</sup> has not overtly divided Baillie's thought into two distinct phases, it has suggested that were such a scheme employed in service to the ordering of Baillie's thought, the demarcation would most appropriately occur with the publication of *Our Knowledge of God* (1939). For one, *Our Knowledge of God* signals marked intellectual developments in Baillie's MT, particularly with regard to Baillie's thought on the problems of knowledge of God and revelation.<sup>176</sup> As my diachronic trace centers upon these problems, the division at this point is a natural one. Secondly, as my focus is on MI's development and its relationship to Baillie's MT, *Our Knowledge of God* is the most suitable choice: it is this work in which Baillie's MT makes first explicit mention of MI. Thirdly, as *Our Knowledge of God* is, according to Fergusson, characterized by an epistemological shift in Baillie's

<sup>175</sup> E.g., Fergusson divides Baillie's thought into three time periods in "Orthodox Liberal".

<sup>176</sup> As spelled out in this chapter's exposition of *Knowledge of God*.

thought—one now characterized by increased critical realism, a stronger doctrine of revelation, and an emphasis on the contextuality (mediation, I would say) of knowledge of God—this work is the natural choice. In addition, if possibly the “outstanding weakness” of Baillie’s MT is in fact its failed integration of general revelation and special revelation, then *Our Knowledge of God* is a good work for delineating Baillie’s latter thought and his early thought: MI is important, as Fergusson is rightly inclined to think, for Baillie’s attempted reconciliation of these types of revelation.<sup>177</sup> This division’s method lends itself to the isolation an analysis of this possible difficulty and development in Baillie’s MT.

This division, then, is whose scheme’s rationale derives from scholarly insight into the trajectory of Baillie’s MT. Its first chapter begins with an elucidation of Baillie’s reflection on his spiritual and intellectual development during his early childhood and his formal education. Here, we shall find evidence that Baillie was considering his concept of MI well before his first explicit mention of it in his 1939 publication *Our Knowledge of God*.

### 3.2. BAILLIE’S EARLY CHILDHOOD (1886-91)

John Baillie was born in the Scottish Highland town of Gairloch, a small fishing village on the West Coast of Rosshire. His childhood dwelling was a Free Church Manse; his father, the Reverend John Baillie, the pastor of the local community. Although the Reverend Baillie died when John was five years old, it was not be before he made a lifelong impression on John. Recalling a father who was “a Calvinist divine of strong character and courtly bearing”,<sup>178</sup> Baillie portrays his father as having been highly involved in his son’s theological development. For example, Baillie speaks of a recurring image which continues to haunt him, well after his father’s death: a rather young John is propped upon a father’s knee and undergoing an oral examination of sorts beside a fire. The question put to the boy is the first from the *Westminster Shorter Catechism*: “What is

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<sup>177</sup> A partial summary of MI from Fergusson: “All history has its centre and meaning in Christ, and Baillie appears to make the further claim that knowledge of God which is mediated here controls and shapes what we know of God elsewhere.” “Orthodox Liberal”, pp. 142-43

<sup>178</sup> From John Baillie’s biographical essay on his brother, Donald, in Donald M. Baillie, *The Theology of The Sacraments* (New York: Scribners, 1957), p. 13.

the chief end of man?” Although Baillie assuredly, and uncharacteristically,<sup>179</sup> failed to score a First on this exam, he recalls that this father-son encounter provided the young Baillie with some theological insight:

My own infant capacity must have been weak indeed, for “chiefend” was to me a single word, and a word whose precise meaning was beyond my imagining. But I did grasp, I think, even then, something of the general teaching that was meant to be conveyed, and I grew up understanding and believing that only in the everlasting enjoyment of God’s presence could my life ever reach its proper and divinely appointed fulfillment.<sup>180</sup>

Baillie’s mother, Annie Macpherson, also played a prominent role in Baillie’s early exposure to Calvinist theology. Also well versed in the Westminster Standards, she was, by Baillie’s estimation, a quite competent Calvinistic apologist: when it came to the Standards, she was “well able to answer any objections that might be brought against them.”<sup>181</sup>

Yet, it was not so much the daily round of doctrine, but rather the quality of parental relations, which impacted Baillie’s early understanding of Christianity. Baillie elaborates:

As little can I reach a day when I was conscious of myself but not of God as I can reach a day when I was conscious of myself but not of other human beings. My earliest memories have a definitely religious atmosphere. They contain as part of their substance a recognition, as vague and articulate as you will, yet quite unmistakable for anything else, of what I have now learned to call the divine as a factor in my life. I cannot remember a time when I did not already feel, in some dim way, that I was ‘not my own’ to do with as I pleased, but was claimed by a higher power

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<sup>179</sup> Uncharacteristic for Baillie. For example, his undergraduate degree from the University of Edinburgh in 1908 was a Distinguished First in Philosophy. Alec Cheyne, “The Baillie Brothers: A Biographical Introduction”, p. 3. In David A.S Fergusson (Ed.), *Christ Church and Society* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1993).

<sup>180</sup> John Baillie, *And the Life Everlasting* (London: Scribners, 1934), p. 3.

<sup>181</sup> John Baillie, ‘Donald: A Brother’s Impression’, in D.M. Baillie, *The Theology of the Sacraments and Other Papers* (1957), pp. 13-14. Cited in A.C. Cheyne, *Studies in Scottish Church History*, p. 203.

not my own . . . For, as far back as I can remember anything, I was somehow aware that my parents lived under the same kind of authority as that which, through them, was communicated to me. I can see that my parents too behaved as though they, *even they*, were not their own .

<sup>182</sup>

The Baillie parents' pious Christian living, coupled with their doctrinal teaching, apparently made a lasting impression on John's two younger brothers, as well. This is evidenced in their career trajectories: Donald, John's younger brother of a year, would forge a distinguished career as an academic and a pastor. The author of what many consider to be one of the most outstanding christological works of the twentieth-century, *God Was in Christ*,<sup>183</sup> Donald was also a renowned pastor. Peter, the youngest boy, would serve the Christian Faith as a medical missionary in India, before accidentally drowning to death in India at the age of 25 years. Each brother undoubtedly contributed to John's early theological development and spiritual growth.

When the Baillie boys ventured out of their childhood manse, they found themselves ensconced in a Gairloch community replete with intellectual and spiritual richness. Looking back on that Gairloch community, John remarks that

I have never since those days had the good fortune to live in a community that was, generally speaking, so well-informed in matters theological, so well acquainted with the contents of the Bible or so well able to explain and defend what it professed to believe. Not many systems of thought have been devised which (once certain initial premises are granted) hang together in so coherent a whole, or in which the vulnerable Achilles-heel is so hard to find.

. . . . There was here [also] as deep and sincere a development of personal religion as could perhaps anywhere be pointed to in the Christian world. The practice of prayer, private, domestic and public, was given a primary place in the daily and weekly round and was a deep reality for men's thoughts. There was a strong

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<sup>182</sup> *OKG*, p.5.

<sup>183</sup> Donald Baillie, *God Was in Christ: An Essay on Incarnation and Atonement* (London: Faber, 1948). Donald was Chair of Systematic Theology at St. Mary's College, St. Andrews, from 1934-1954.

evangelical note, so that one's mind was constantly being turned upon the necessity of regeneration, and yet any kind of sensational or over-emotional 'evangelistic' movement was looked at askance.<sup>184</sup>

Speaking further of the Gairloch community which mediated to the young Baillie his early understanding of Christianity, Baillie emphasizes that his blossoming childhood awareness of God was mediated by communal contexts and personal relations which, not unlike his relationships with his parents and the Gairloch community at-large, were characterized by Christian fellowship. In particular, Baillie experienced God's presence in his communal sharing of The Lord's Supper.

Nowhere else [emphasis mine], however imposing and fitting may have been the ritual, have I ever been so aware of the *mysterium tremendum* as in those rare celebrations of the Lord's Supper. Here, if ever, *das Numinose*, 'the sense of the Holy,' was found prevailing.<sup>185</sup>

Six years after penning the above disclosure in his 1933 "Confessions of a Transplanted Scot" (hereafter, "Confessions"), the mediating theologian maintains the following.

. . . Just as in the sacrament of Holy Communion the Real Presence of Christ is given (if the Lutheran phrase may here be used without prejudice) 'in, with and under' the bread and wine, so in a wider sense the whole corporeal world may become sacramental to us of the presence of the Triune God.

. . . But it is equally certain that our knowledge of God is given "in, with, and under" our knowledge of one another. This means, first, that knowledge of God is withholden from those who keep themselves aloof from the *service* [Baillie's emphasis] of their fellows . . . It means, second,

<sup>184</sup> John Baillie, "Confessions of a Transplanted Scot", *Contemporary American Theology*, second series, ed., by Vergilius Ferm (New York, 1933), pp. 33-34.

<sup>185</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 34.

that only when I am in *fellowship* [Baillie's emphasis] with my fellow men does the knowledge of God come to me individually . . . It means, third, the necessity of history. . . The Christian knowledge of God is not given to any man save in conjunction with the telling of an 'old, old, story'. Therefore, it means, lastly, the necessity of Christ, God incarnate in the flesh . . . The service of others, the fellowship with others, and the historical tradition in which I stand are all media that leads me to the Mediator, and the Mediator leads me to God.

. . . . Clearly, then, the immediacy of God's presence to our soul is a mediated immediacy.<sup>186</sup>

Theological prowess, balanced thinking, a personal form of religion, and pious Christian devotion—these, according to Baillie, were the hallmarks of the community at large and of the personal relations who mediated to Baillie's earliest awareness of God's presence. With time, Baillie's own life and thought would be distinguished by its embodiment of these very hallmarks. Concerning the latter, this would include Baillie's thought on MI—a concept which, amongst other things, emphasizes the soul's personal encounter with God “in, with and under” a sacramental universe.

### **3.3. BAILLIE'S FORMAL EDUCATION (1891-1912)**

#### **3.3.1. The Royal Academy of Inverness (1891-1904)**

When Baillie's father died, Baillie's mother moved the family to Inverness in 1891. Resolved to provide John and Donald with an excellent education, she enrolled the boys in the historic Royal Academy of Inverness.<sup>187</sup>

John indicates that his stay at the academy was both challenging and illuminating. For one, the Royal Academy afforded Baillie an intellectual climate whose humanism had been relatively foreign to him. Relating in “Confessions” that prior to the move, “all [his] early religious associations were with the more strictly Calvinistic type of Scottish

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<sup>186</sup> *OKG*, pp. 178-181, *passim*.

<sup>187</sup> John Baillie, *Invitation to Pilgrimage* (London, Pelican edition, 1960), p. 45. Original edition: Oxford University Press, 1942.

Presbyterianism,”<sup>188</sup> Baillie elsewhere discloses that the milieu was for him spiritually trying.

I have often reflected that parents who dutifully bring up their children in a traditional orthodoxy which has never submitted itself to the challenge of the Renaissance and Aufklärung, and who then send them to a school whose whole ethos is of humanist inspiration, seldom realize the extent of the spiritual stress and strain to which they are thus subjecting them.<sup>189</sup>

Baillie, by his account, appears to have adapted fairly well, however. For one, he came to recognize “certain spiritual deficiencies in [his] inherited system”. What was the nature of those deficiencies? The deficiencies concerned Baillie’s previously orthodox Calvinist thought on the scope of the mediation of God’s Presence, in particular: for Baillie came to believe that God’s presence could also be sensed in, for instance, poetry. Introduced by his friends and masters to new “mentors”—the Victorians Thackeray, Dickens, Tennyson, Arnold, Kingsley, Carlyle and Ruskin—Baillie divulges in his “Confessions” that he was now most thoroughly “deep in the poets.”<sup>190</sup>

Moreover, the young man at the Royal Academy was now deeply ensconced in Plato’s thought—a thought that was challenging, as Baillie puts it, his “virgin mind”. The challenge to his Calvinistic worldview, Baillie indicates, concerned what was for him an encounter with new regions of truth and experience:

I can remember how deeply I was moved in these days by our reading of the *Apology* and the *Phaedo* in the Greek class . . . I, at least, coming to them from my particular background, could not read Plato and Carlyle and Matthew Arnold without being, even then, aware of a slowly emerging intellectual problem. Here was a new world of

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<sup>188</sup> “Confessions”, p. 33.

<sup>189</sup> John Baillie, *The Theology of the Sacraments*, p.14.

<sup>190</sup> “Confessions”, p. 35.

thought opened to me, a very different world from the austere Highland Calvinism of my immediate surroundings . . . My difficulty was that through these new mentors I seemed to be becoming initiated into a certain region of truth and experience which could not easily be enclosed within the clearly defined frontiers of my traditional system [emphasis mine].<sup>191</sup>

Baillie’s struggle with this “slowly emerging intellectual problem”—the reconciliation of newfound regions of truth and experience with his theological inheritance—would continue well beyond his stay at the Royal Academy. That will be discussed in the following section.

We observe, then, a young Baillie who is beginning to struggle with the reconciliation of his is Christian experience of God’s Presence, as mediated by Christian doctrine, fellowship and sacrament, with a developing belief that God presence can be mediated by poetry and philosophy. We also observe a Baillie who, in the midst of Baillie’s struggles, is becoming somewhat renowned for his being one both an apologist (e.g., Baillie was president of the Academy’s debating society) and a scholar in-the-making: Baillie, according to J.A. Mackay, was “the school’s most brilliant student”.<sup>192</sup>

### 3.3.2. Edinburgh University (1904-08)

In 1904 Baillie matriculated to Edinburgh University to study philosophy, his newly found love. A curriculum that would be “much influenced by each of the four highly gifted thinkers who were lecturing in philosophical subjects” (James Seth, Henry Barker, R.P. Hardie, and Andrew Seth Pringle-Pattison) in particular, it was by all estimations devoured by a Baillie who had arrived at Edninburgh with, in Baillie’s words, a “religious problem”—one to such an extent that he had “descended into the valley of the shadow of the negative.”<sup>193</sup>

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<sup>191</sup> “Confessions”, p. 36.

<sup>192</sup> As indicated in a letter of condolence to Jewel Baillie (John’s wife), in light of John’s death. Newlands, *Transatlantic Theology*, p. 293.

<sup>193</sup> “Confessions”, p. 36.



The source of Baillie's so-called religious problem was his seeming inability to reconcile competing intellectual currents with themselves, and either with his Christian faith: on one hand, there was absolute idealism, the versions of F.H. Bradley and Bernard Bosanquet, in particular; on the other, naturalism, whose mechanistic and materialistic reductionism was being largely substantiated by a Darwinian theory of evolution seemingly not short on explanatory power. In short, Baillie was persuaded that each philosophical position spoke a half-truth to the denial of the half-truth found in the other; and that neither half-truth seemed reconcilable with Baillie's Christian theology of knowledge of God.

It was at this time that Baillie became entrenched in Pringle-Pattison's philosophy—a system which, in brief, maintains, with absolute idealism, that the Absolute is Mind, though rejects absolute idealism's claim that, contrary to naturalism, empirical science cannot provide (scientific) truths; a system which, contrary to absolute idealism and naturalism, maintains that reality and religion are inherently personal. How is it able to do so? Pringle-Pattison's philosophy maintains that reality is a multi-leveled, gradated valuation field, with multiple knowledge types that are mediated to persons on multiple levels of experience. For example, while empirical science is said to provide some knowledge about Reality, it does not provide an exhaustive account of persons' knowledge, as the materialistic interpretation of religion maintains, as scientific knowledge is but one type of knowledge about reality.<sup>194</sup>

Thirty years after his graduation from Edinburgh, Baillie writes in *Our Knowledge of God* that the work's primary concern is with "our attempt to understand the relations of God to the soul". He subsequently indicates that this task calls for him to mediate amongst competing positions: "My purpose has been the irenic one of endeavouring to distinguish the true insight within each alternative [position] from that blindness in it which renders it insensitive to the insight of the other."<sup>195</sup>

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<sup>194</sup>In Baillie's first major work, *Interpretation of Religion*, Baillie indicates his agreement with Pringle-Pattison: "In religion we are . . . much closer to our ultimate values and standards than we are in science. We are dealing here directly with the things we know matter most—with justice and honour, with character and the will to serve . . . . *The certitude of science differs from the certitude of religion in that the former proceeds primarily from the intellect, whereas the latter proceeds from the personality as a whole.*" *IOR*, pp. 375 -376. Baillie's italicized emphasis.

<sup>195</sup> *OKG*, Preface.

Our consideration of Baillie's development at Edinburgh discloses a young man who was even then very much a mediating theologian in the making. We find Baillie (1) already mediating between competing positions—between the supposed half-truths of idealism and naturalism and their implications for Christian faith; (2) preoccupied with the issue of God's relation to the soul; (3) preoccupied with the perceived strengths and weaknesses of epistemologies; (4) entertaining a model of reality which emphasizes multiple knowledges; (5) maintaining that multiple knowledges an organically related universe (6) attempting to wed conceptually insights from religion with insights from morality; (7) contending for Personality as the supreme Knowledge—a Knowledge whose Certitude is mediated by relationships between personalities. All of these emphases resonate with Baillie's thought and agenda in *Our Knowledge of God*, including his concept of MI.

In his "Theology and The University: John Baillie",<sup>196</sup> John McIntyre remarks that Baillie conceived of the university as a place "to explore the relationship of theology to other branches of learning."<sup>197</sup> McIntyre goes on to contend that MI is a concept especially characteristic of Baillie's conceptualization of that relationship, "for God is thought to be known in those fields in which other disciplines operate."<sup>198</sup> I would add that Baillie's own personal experience as an undergraduate university also impacted the mediating theologian's perspective on "theology's compresence" in the university: we find a Baillie at Edinburgh who is struggling intellectually to conceive of the mediation of knowledge of God's presence across disciplines, and one whose religious problem is being somewhat quashed, as he is seemingly able to reconcile his characteristically critical pious Christian faith with, for instance, a philosophy—one whose personal idealism conceives of the mediation of God's presence on multiple levels of reality and across multiple disciplines (e.g., poetry, philosophy).

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<sup>196</sup> John McIntyre, "Theology and the University: John Baillie", *New College Bulletin*, no. 14, September, 1983. Cited in A.C. Cheyne, *Studies in Scottish Church History*. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999, p. 219-20.

<sup>197</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19, in Cheyne, p. 220.

<sup>198</sup> "Confessions", pp. 40-43.

### 3.3.3. New College (1908-12)

Though Pringle-Pattison's thought would assist Baillie with his "religious problem," it would be four years of theological training in New College which would ultimately guide Baillie toward a more "positive outlook". This is to say that Baillie's more positive outlook was not vouchsafed entirely by his refined understanding of metaphysical systems; rather, it was through his exposure to a different set of thinkers, coupled with his increased interest in understanding religion's essence, that Baillie was able to find the answer to his religious problem. Speaking of his education at New College, Baillie remarks:

In my progress towards a more secure mental outlook than I enjoyed in my undergraduate years these general philosophical adventures were less important than certain other influences of a more purely theological kind under which I now came and which seemed to show me that what was necessary for the solution of my problem was rather a deeper insight into religion itself than the successful construction of a lay system of metaphysics.<sup>199</sup>

Baillie's progress toward a more secure mental outlook at New College was aided by four of its better known teachers at the time: Alexander Whyte (Principal), H.A.A. Kennedy (Professor of New Testament), H.R. Mackintosh (Professor of Systematic Theology) and Alexander Martin (Professor of Apologetics and Pastoral Theology). Thinkers of a more liberal Christian theological persuasion—characteristic of much of the intellectual climate in Scottish Presbyterianism since at least 1860<sup>200</sup>—each was committed to three theological positions: "commitment to the use of historical and literary criticism in the study of the Bible; wariness of what seemed to be undue emphasis on credal and confessional statements; and respect for the methods of natural science." Beliefs to which John (and Donald) would eventually give their cautious allegiance,<sup>201</sup> they announce a shift in Baillie's intellectual development, his appreciation for history's importance for

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<sup>199</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 43.

<sup>200</sup> A.C. Cheyne, *Studies in Scottish Church History* (Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999), pp. 209-210.

<sup>201</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 209-210.

understanding truths about Christianity, in particular. Specifically, this shift occasioned an increased appreciation for the historical study of the New Testament (in particular) and for history's being a source for understanding religion in general. Baillie reflects on this turning point in his intellectual development when, discussing his student days at New College, he relates that

More and more, indeed, as the years go by, have I found myself being instructed by history rather than by independent dialectical reflection. More and more have I come to feel that, if I am to decide whether such and such a belief be a true and wise one, my first step must be clearly and deeply to understand its history—to know how it came into the world, from what quarters it has encountered opposition and what have been its fortunes in age-long debate.<sup>202</sup>

Although the value of the examination of religion itself, as within the historical context of its development, would prove an important insight for both Baillie's theological trajectory, he would glean substantially more important theological insight from his stay in New College.

The most important change of mind which came to me during these years in New College and in Germany was of another kind, and I think that what it amounted to was the gradual realization that religion is in possession of an insight into reality which is all its own and cannot be reached at all without its aid. This is the change of mind, of course, which in European thought is represented in different ways by the two great names of Kant and Schleiermacher, and it was in close connection with my study of the Critical Philosophy and of *Der christliche Glaube* that it was accomplished in my own case.<sup>203</sup>

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<sup>202</sup> "Confessions", p. 45.

<sup>203</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 46.

“Religion is in possession of an insight into reality which is all its own and cannot be reached at all without its aid”—here is Baillie’s great insight in New College. An insight precipitated thus by Baillie’s reading of Kant and Schleiermacher, it was, however, Herrmann’s thought, to which Baillie was routinely exposed during a summer’s worth of attendance at Herrmann’s lectures in Marburg (the other summer was spent in Jena), that would exert the most influence on Baillie’s thought at this time—Herrmann’s take on the position that religion possesses an insight in reality all its own, in particular.

We see, then, that Baillie’s education at New College was a formative time for Baillie’s intellectual development and his *Anfechtungen*’s abasement. Indeed, when the now relatively self-assured Baillie graduated from New College, he left with seven axioms that would guide his subsequent theological investigation. These axioms, expounded in Baillie’s 1933 publication “Confessions of a Transplanted Scot”, merit extended quotation, as they both document Baillie’s theological state of mind at that time, and anticipate Baillie’s thought on MI in 1939.

(1) That the truths for which religion stands are of such a kind as to be accessible and as evidence to those quite untrained in science and philosophy as to those who can boast the fullest scientific and philosophical training;

(2) That, however, these truths can be brought home to us only through the discipline of religious experience itself and can consequently never be evident to anybody save in such measure as he is visited by such experience;

(3) That the only means by which our hold on these truths can be made more secure is, not the pursuit of any independent scientific enquiry in which they can be buttressed from without, but by the progressive deepening of religious insight.

(4) That accordingly the only competent *criticism* of religious convictions is one carried out, not in the light of knowledge obtained by some non-religious means, but in light of advancing religion itself—leading to the discovery that the convictions in question are not as *religious* as they ought to be;

(5) That accordingly religious certitude, far from being a product of scientific metaphysics, or being in any way more fully enjoyed by scientific metaphysicians than by other

folk, must be, for any scientific metaphysician who possesses it, the main (though certainly not the only) fact on which his metaphysical system will be built;

(6) That while religious faith may communicate something of its own certitude to a metaphysical system in the formation of which it has been allowed to play its proper part, yet no such system can ever hope to possess the same degree or kind of certitude as attaches to the fundamental religious insights themselves;

(7) That, as regards natural science, the most we have a right to expect of it is that, as Kant has said, it should “leave room for faith,” not that it should in any way provide a positive foundation for faith.

It will be realized at once that these are not really seven different axioms but are all deducible from a single principle—the principle already stated, that religious faith is not a dim fore-grasping of a reality which other and exacter processes of thought and research will afterward more clearly reveal and establish, but a way of knowledge which is at least equal to any other in point of reliability and which leads us into the presence of a Reality that is not discoverable by any other means. It was this principle and little, that I took from the Schleiermacher-Ritschl tradition in which Herrmann stood . . .

. . . . Except in regard to the [tradition’s] one great un-Greek insight [that the existence and knowledge of God must be justified on grounds unique to religious experience] . . . I still remain a Christian Platonist [emphasis mine].<sup>204</sup>

### 3.4. BAILLIE’S ACADEMIC CAREER: MAJOR PUBLICATIONS (1912-60)

When Baillie graduated from New College (1912), he assumed an assistantship in philosophy under Pringle-Pattison. He also served as an assistant pastor in an Edinburgh church during this time.<sup>205</sup> These assistantships would be short-lived, as Baillie would volunteer his services to the Y.M.C.A (1915-1919) during World War I. This service would profoundly impact the orientation of Baillie’s theology, as well as bring him a wife—Jewel Baillie, descendent of the Elizabethan Bishop Jewel. When the Y.M.C.A.

<sup>204</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 50-52.

<sup>205</sup> John A. Mackay, “John Baillie, A lyrical Tribute and Appraisal”, *Scottish Journal of Theology*, IX (1956), p. 228.

service was completed in 1919, the newlyweds moved to New York State. Here Baillie assumed teaching duties in systematic theology at Auburn Theological Seminary and held the Chair of Christian Theology (1919-1927). Baillie was subsequently appointed to Chair of Systematic Theology at Emmanuel College, Toronto (1927 to 1930). An appointment to the Roosevelt Chair of Systematic Theology (1930-1934) at Union Theological Seminary (New York), followed. Baillie's fifteen-year stay in America bore him his first four books: *The Roots of Religion in the Human Soul* (1926), *The Interpretation of Religion* (1929), *The Place of Jesus Christ in Modern Christianity* (1929), and *And the Life Everlasting* (1933).<sup>206</sup>

The Baillie's returned to Scotland in 1934, as John was invited to succeed Pringle-Pattison as the Chair of Divinity in the University of Edinburgh. Baillie would hold this post until his retirement in 1956, save a temporary hiatus—a return to the Y.M.C.A. (1940) for service. Baillie's major publications in Scotland include his well-known devotional works, *A Diary of Private Prayer* (1936); his most highly acclaimed apologetic work, *Our Knowledge of God* (1939); and his also important, *Invitation to Pilgrimage* (1942), *The Belief in Progress* (1950), and *The Idea of Revelation in Recent Thought* (1956).

Three of Baillie's works were published after his death in Edinburgh (1960): his undelivered, though officially accorded, Gifford Lectures (1960), published as *The Sense of the Presence of God* (1962), as well as his *Christian Devotion* (1962) and *A Reasoned Faith* (1963).<sup>207</sup>

### 3.5. SUMMARY

The spiritual climate of Baillie's childhood was replete with Baillie's indoctrination in theological training, participation in a personal form of religion, and exposure to Christian communities whose personal relations were characterized by Christian piety. This upbringing, coupled with Baillie's formal education and personal struggles, collectively laid the foundation for Baillie's theological orientation, that of a mediating theologian. It also influenced Baillie's doctrine. Looking back at his childhood,

<sup>206</sup> Alec C. Cheyne, "The Baillie Brothers: A Biographical Introduction", in David A.S. Fergusson, ed., *Christ Church and Society: Essays on John Baillie and Donald Baillie*, pp. 3-4

<sup>207</sup> Cheyne, "The Baillie Brothers", p. 5.

recalls that his childhood experience of God was a MI. Accordingly, Baillie indicates that that he tended to have a “deep awareness” of God’s Presence, when God’s Presence was mediated to him by communities of persons *qua* personalities whose language and deeds reflected Personality—namely, communities characterized by *agapē*. Baillie, looking back at his formal education, discloses a young man who, attempting to reconcile competing philosophical and theological positions, began to conceive of knowledge of God as an immediate knowledge of Personality—One whose Presence was mediated across multiple levels of reality and across multiple disciplines. Initially, God’s seeming Self-disclosure through media like poetry distressed Baillie’s “virgin mind” of Baillie; however, he was able to receive some existential relief from the thought of A.S. Pringle-Pattison, who showed Baillie some ways to reconcile his orthodox Calvinist upbringing with his relatively liberal new-found epistemological inclinations. Inclined, however, to think that knowledge of Personality could be established by any highest inference, it was rather Herrmann’s thought which resonated more with Baillie’s thought, particularly Herrmann’s position that religion is *sui generis*. This also helped Baillie to achieve a more secure mental outlook. Along the way, we have also found some evidence to suggest that Pringle-Pattison and Herrmann anticipated, if perhaps also directly influenced, Baillie’s conceptualization and development of MI.



*But it is knowledge of ultimate reality that we most desire to have, and certitude in this region of our thinking that is most precious to us . . . As one looks back over the whole history of our race, one must realize that this was at all times and in all places the most deep-seated of human interests.*<sup>208</sup>

#### 4. BAILLIE'S EARLY MEDIATING THEOLOGY (1926-38)

This chapter initiates the turn toward our examination of Baillie's MT proper. A diachronic trace that examines Baillie's early MT (pre-1939) in particular, it focuses primarily on the structure and claims of Baillie's apologetic, as levied against several theories of religion. Works consulted include those major and minor works widely regarded to be important for Baillie's thought on knowledge of God, revelation and religious experience, in particular. The first half of a two-stage diachronic trace, this chapter provides evidence that, contrary to popular belief, the mediating theologian was employing a nascent concept of MI well before his *Our Knowledge of God* (1939).

##### 4.1. A MEDIATING THEOLOGY FOR THE ORDINARY PERSON

John Baillie's first two major publications are his *The Roots of Religion in the Human Soul* (1926) and his *The Interpretation of Religion* (1929). The latter work was assimilated between the Autumn of 1922 and the Spring of 1925, and advances many of the aims and conclusions of the former.<sup>209</sup> For instance, Baillie's objective in each work is to "set forth a true theory of religion" based upon what his study of religion shows to be its "true and abiding and indispensable essence". Baillie's method for getting at religion's essence requires his guiding of the student of religion "through the winding labyrinths both of historical opinion and of contemporary literature" on religion. A journey that requires that Baillie "dig down afresh to [religion's] deep foundations in

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<sup>208</sup> *SPG*, p. 20.

<sup>209</sup> *IOR*, Preface, viii.

human experience”,<sup>210</sup> it demands an interrogation of religious consciousness with a theological-scientific method (Chapter 2), in particular. Each work also limits the scope of its investigation primarily to classic European philosophical theology and philosophy of religion. Each early work also discloses a mediating theologian who is trying to reconcile a host of intellectual currents.

Baillie’s mediation in these works occurs within the broader context of a seeming conflict between relatively sophisticated academic philosophies of religion and the lay form of religion espoused by the “ordinary man”. Religion has become of “practical irrelevance” of the ordinary person. Who is this person? For purposes of Baillie’s analyses and would-be reconciliation, this person is the World War I soldier, by and large. Such a one is typically unlearned in metaphysical speculation, romantic theology, mystical contemplation, and the various theories of religion to which these and other theories have given rise; and, also not unlike the ordinary person, the soldier tends to champion a religion whose basis, power and credulity are alien to much of the thought for which the more academic approaches to religion contend.

Baillie knows these ordinary persons and their theory of religion. For one, he has knowledge of soldiers by personal acquaintance.<sup>211</sup> Secondly, Baillie has privy to research knowledge about their beliefs, as contained in “a certain body of literature which has hardly . . . received quite the share of attention it deserves at the hands of the theologically minded.” Baillie speaks of *The Army and Religion*,<sup>212</sup> wherein he finds a ‘surprising unity of testimony’ amongst British soldiers.

These men as a whole believe that the Churches are out of touch with reality and out of touch with ordinary humanity. They think them irrelevant to the real business of their

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<sup>210</sup> Quotes from *ROR*, 39-48 *passim*. See *ibid.*, Ch. 1, for Baillie’s thoughts on soldiers’ testimonies and questionnaire data.

<sup>211</sup> Baillie served with the British armies in France from 1915-1919 through his participation in the Y.M.C.A. Baillie’s also served the Y.M.C.A. from 1939-1940, once again providing religious and educational assistance to troops in France. He contributed to the Dunkirk evacuation.

<sup>212</sup> A volume of British soldiers’ responses to questionnaires distributed by a committee under the conernship of David S. Cairns and Edward A. Talbot. Baillie also references, e.g., W.P. Young, *A Soldier to the Church*; A. Herbert Gray, *As Tommy Sees Us*; Neville Talbot, *Thoughts on Religion at the Front*; Canon Macnutt (ed.), *The Church in the Furnace*, Donald Hankey, *A Student in Arms*; Donald Hankey, *The Church and the Man*. See *ROR*, p. 7.

lives, antiquated in their ideas and methods, and wanting in vitality and conviction.<sup>213</sup>

On the basis of soldiers' testimony, Baillie concludes that

If we put all the evidence together, one major charge stands out in the very boldest relief, and that is that there is a lack of reality about the religion of the Christian Church, and a conspicuous unpreparedness to the real problems of human life.<sup>214</sup>

French and American soldiers, who have answered similar questionnaires, are also inclined as a whole to think the Christian church out of touch with reality.

What has occasioned soldiers' disenchantment with the Christian Church? Baillie relates that the primary culprit is religious doctrine:

There are many who have lost their way in its [religion's] maze of doctrines and sects. That is the real root of our trouble and I believe there is only one way of meeting it—we must find our way back to the fountainhead. We must make re-discovery, and help others make re-discovery, of the true centre of gravity in this accumulated mass of tradition.<sup>215</sup>

Competing religious traditions; divisions over doctrines within those traditions; conflicting truth claims over what constitutes orthodoxy—these confuse soldiers who, generally speaking, know religion to be simply a matter of “doing what’s right.”

In the following sections, we will examine the structure of Baillie's lines of argument against five theories of religion, in particular: the romantic theory of religion,

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<sup>213</sup> *The Army and Religion*, p. 194. Cited in Baillie, *ibid.*, p. 12.

<sup>214</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12 .

<sup>215</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 40. See *ibid.*, Chapter I, 1-41 for Baillie's thoughts on “The Present Situation in Religion”.

the rationalist theory of religion, theological intuitionism, Kant's theory of religion, and neo-Kantian theories of religion. Theories of religion which are, to varying degrees, out of keeping with the ordinary person's theory of religion, each theory conflicts with Baillie's own theory of religion.

We shall find that, although Baillie mediates amongst several theories of religion, all of the apologist's arguments zero in on one epistemological problem in particular: *the epistemological relationship between direct knowledge of, and indirect knowledge about, God*. Baillie's position being that all of the above-mentioned theories advance a faulty conceptualization of this relationship, he maintains that it is better to conceive of religion as does the ordinary person: a matter of acting upon (i.e. "faith") what one's moral consciousness immediately intuits to be of highest value.

#### **4.2. A MEDIATING THEOLOGY ACROSS THEORIES OF RELIGION**

Although *The Interpretation of Religion* (hereafter, *IOR*) is largely an amplification of the more humble *The Roots of Religion* (hereafter, *ROR*), some brief examination of Baillie's positions in the latter work is necessary. For one, the work provides a general framework of those issues substantially more developed in *IOR*. Secondly, as this is Baillie's first major publication, its examination helps to establish, in keeping with the aims of my diachronic trace, the evolution and general trajectory of Baillie's critical<sup>216</sup> mediating theological corpus.

##### **4.2.1. Romanticism's Fallacy: An Indirectly-known God via Pre-reflection**

When, in *ROR*, Baillie argues against the romantic theory of religion, he takes aim at romantic theology. The essence of romantic theology, according to Baillie, is that it grounds religion in a knowledge believed to be "below the level of reflective thought".

Indeed . . . the essence of this [romantic] theology is capable of being stated without reference to feeling at all. What characterises the romanticist theologians is just the attempt to find the roots of religion somewhere in the mind *below the level of reflective thought*; and there is hardly any

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<sup>216</sup> Our concern is primarily with Baillie's critical thought and not with his devotional works.

mental element or activity lying in this pre-rational region that has not, at some time or another during the last hundred years, been exploited in the interests of anti-rationalism.<sup>217</sup>

Baillie's characterization of romantic theology as essentially "pre-rational" provides Baillie a helpful category with which he can argue against the romantic theory of religion as a whole. It is, on Baillie's tongue, a reiteration of a word with which the reader is already familiar—immediacy. Indeed, Baillie identifies no less than three strains of "immediacy" that are problematic for the romantic theory of religion. These include knowledge of God as an "immediate feeling," "immediate vision" and "immediate experience". Baillie argues that each of type of "immediacy" gives rise to a theory of religion which is a "disservice to religion", as each type of immediacy rejects what is "obvious" to the ordinary person: knowledge of God is both a direct knowledge and a knowledge "mediated by the ideas present in our minds".<sup>218</sup>

#### 4.2.1.1 "Immediate feeling" and Schleiermacher

In *ROR* Baillie criticizes Schleiermacher's romantic theory of religion, maintaining that it is "a disservice to religion", in that it grounds religion in an "immediate feeling of dependence" upon God. The ordinary person, however, thinks such immediacy "the very hallmark of subjectivity". Accordingly, when Schleiermacher's thought advocates the "sheltering of [religion] from the criticism of reflection of intelligence", it not only severs religion "from all claim to objective truth"; its idea of "immediate feeling" also, to its disfavor, reduces religion to a "sentimentality" that "lacks reality". Thus unreal to the ordinary person, Schleiermacher's theory of religion is also unreal to the academician, as it does "give our thinking contemporaries good reason for ignoring it [religion] altogether." When, for example, Schleiermacher's idea of immediate feeling does "considerable violence to [the] psychological fact" that non-religious feelings always entail humans' being "cognitively aware of the stimuli" to

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<sup>217</sup> *ROR*, p. 81. Cf. *IOR*, p. 202. Here Baillie indicates that "pre-reflective" thought is "pre-rational" and "pre-intellectual".

<sup>218</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 79.

which those feelings correspond epistemically, it invites academics learned in psychology to ignore religion's claims. Better, maintains Baillie, to contend for the reality that humans are "cognitively aware" of a God "immediately" known.<sup>219</sup>

Baillie supplements his somewhat empirical-psychological criticism of Schleiermacher's idea of immediacy with a more philosophical line of criticism: knowledge of the mundane world, he argues, presupposes "consciousness of" and "consciousness about" the object claimed to be known.

You can never have a feeling which is not a feeling of something. Feeling, indeed, is nothing but our subjective response to external stimuli, and we must first be cognitively aware of the stimuli before we can be affected by them to pain or pleasure.<sup>220</sup>

Here, then, Baillie contends for something like the epistemological necessity of "intentionality" for ordinary knowledge—that ordinary knowledge is always mediated by semiotic or thematic content (i.e., not immediate) as it presupposes, at minimum, consciousness of the object known. Baillie restates the argument in *Interpretation of Religion*, bringing his criticism of Schleiermacher's thought into sharper focus:

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<sup>219</sup> Baillie was aware that Schleiermacher's thought on feeling as the ground for religion evolved. Baillie's critique of Schleiermacher's thought in *ROR* and *IOR* reviews that thought's evolution across two editions of *On Religion: Speeches to its Cultured despisers* (1799, 1806; 1831 edition not addressed) and *The Christian Faith* (1821-2; revised edition 1830-1). In *ROR* and *IOR* Baillie takes aim at Schleiermacher's thought in *The Christian Faith*, the leading question for Baillie being if Schleiermacher was "right in concluding that [religion] could be nothing but 'pure and immediate feeling'?" *IOR*, p. 208. Baillie clarifies his interpretation of Schleiermacher's most mature idea of feeling, when he approvingly cites Ward's summary of the same: "For Schleiermacher's theory, obviously, everything turns on the doctrine that feeling is itself psychologically prior to the two other elements of mental life, knowledge and will. Feeling he believes to be, as such, 'immediate'--that is to say, 'unmediated' by ideas of any kind; so that it is through feeling alone that we first become aware of our environment, knowledge and desire become alike both secondary and 'mediate' products of such awareness." James Ward, *Psychological Principles*, Cambridge University Press, 1918, p. 42 n., as cited in *IOR*, p. 208. Baillie's subsequent criticism of Schleiermacher (*OKG*, *SPG*) also focuses primarily on Schleiermacher's thought in *The Christian Faith*.

<sup>220</sup> 'We have not first a change of feeling and then a change in our sensations, perceptions and ideas; but, these changing, change of feeling follows.' James Ward, *Psychological Principles*, pp. 41-45, as cited in *ROR*, pp. 78-79. Cf. *IOR*, p. 212. Baillie's criticisms anticipate the main lines of Proudfoot's arguments against Schleiermacher and James. See Wayne Proudfoot, *Religious Experience* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1985).

For Schleiermacher's theory, obviously, everything turns on the doctrine that feeling is in itself psychologically prior to the two other elements of mental life, knowledge and will. Feeling he believes to be, as such, 'immediate'—that is to say unmediated by ideas of any kind [emphasis mine]

<sup>221</sup>  
...

In language which anticipates Baillie's latter language of knowledge of God as a "mediated-immediacy", Baillie relates that his major charge against Schleiermacher's theory of religion is its problematic conceptualization of the epistemological relationship between "immediate" knowledge (knowledge "unmediated by ideas of any kind") and mediated knowledge (knowledge mediated "by ideas") for knowledge of God. Baillie underscores that this is his major criticism of Schleiermacher's epistemology, when in the same work he remarks:

'Intuition of the Universe' (*Anschauung des Universums*); 'an awareness of the Infinite in the finite' or of the influences upon us of finite things 'not by themselves but as a part of the Whole, not as limited in opposition to other things but as an exhibition of the Infinite in our life'; 'the immediate consciousness of the Deity as he is found in ourselves and in the world'; 'a feeling of absolute dependence, as being in relation with God'—these are some of the expressions which Schleiermacher uses to describe the essence of religion; and it must be said that there is not one of them that does not describe a definitely cognitive state [emphasis mine].<sup>222</sup>

Schleiermacher's romantic theory of religion, then, constitutes a disservice to religion: it grounds knowledge of God in a "pre-rational" "immediate feeling" that unduly marginalizes cognition: for knowledge of God, like ordinary knowledge about the world, is, according to Baillie, "obviously mediated by the ideas present in our minds."

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<sup>221</sup> *IOR*, p. 208.

<sup>222</sup> *IOR*, pp. 211-212.

And if it be true of all feeling, it seems doubly true of religious feeling. For it would seem that this kind of feeling is dependent, not on cognition merely (which might mean only sense perception), but on nothing less than reflective intelligence . . . Hardly any kind of feelings, therefore, are more obviously mediated by the ideas present in our minds than are our religious feelings [emphasis mine].<sup>223</sup>

#### 4.2.1.2 “Immediate experience” and James’s psychology of religion

In *ROR* Baillie argues against the idea of immediacy advanced by the psychology of religion, as well. His critique focuses on the idea of “immediate experience” espoused by William James in particular. Citing several claims from the “intellectual father” of the psychology of religion, including James’ claim that “all religious ideas, dogmas and creeds are thus intellectual constructions” ultimately reduce to a religious feeling,<sup>224</sup> Baillie maintains that James’s theory of religion is essentially a restatement of Schleiermacher’s<sup>225</sup> and to be discounted, as such, on similar grounds. Indeed, even James’s “new-fangled conception of the subliminal or subconscious” (of which Baillie makes mention in *IOR*) does nothing to strengthen James’s position, as a subconscious, “immediate experience” of “The More” is merely “a slight modification” of Schleiermacher’s “doctrine of the consciousness of the Infinite that comes to us in our awareness of finite things.”<sup>226</sup>

#### 4.2.1.3 “Immediate vision” and “Extreme Mysticism”

Baillie takes aim at a third type of immediacy—one that conceives of knowledge of God as an “immediate vision” —in *ROR*. This theory of religion insists that

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<sup>223</sup> *ROR*, pp. 79.

<sup>224</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 74.

<sup>225</sup>“This view [Schleiermacher’s] of religion as consisting in pure feeling merits our greater attention because, since about the year 1890, it has been given a new lease on life by those American writers who have occupied themselves with what they have called the ‘Psychology of Religion.’ The majority of these writers follow Schleiermacher’s view almost to the letter . . .” *Ibid.*, pp. 72-73.

<sup>226</sup> J. B. Pratt’s “Religion of Feeling”, about which Baillie now makes mention in *Interpretation of Religion*, also constitutes a hindrance to the understanding of religion's essence, its being essentially a Schleiermacherean theory of religion: Pratt states that religion ‘might be defined as belief in God based chiefly on an immediate experience whose dominant element is feeling’. *Ibid.*, Ch. 3, pp. 202-219, *passim*.



knowledge of God is “pre-rational” or “pre-reflective”, as do Schleiermacher's theological and James's psychological theories. It markedly differs from these theories, however, when it maintains that religion's ground is an immediate knowledge of God mediated by a so-called “immediate vision” of God.

There are some among us who, instead of using the language of feeling to explain religion, would use the language of perception. Religion they would tell us is, in essence, neither thought nor feeling so much as immediate vision. It is possible, they say, to attain to a direct perception of God's presence, and that is surely all the foundation that religion needs [emphasis mine].<sup>227</sup>

In *ROR*, Baillie contends that this theory misguidedly fails to “appeal . . . to the normal religion of Jesus and Paul, Augustine and Luther, but to the more emotional and ecstatic and . . . pathological piety represented by the extremer mystics”. He also identifies it with “recent American writers”, though identifies only one British poet, Coventry Patmore, as espousing it.<sup>228</sup>

In *IOR*, we get a fuller argument against this variant of the romantic theory. Here, Baillie re-identifies the theory with “extreme” mysticism (hereafter, “extreme mysticism”) and directs his criticism toward that which makes it “extreme”: its claim that humans have a “sixth-sense” for apprehending an “immediate vision” of God. A claim evidenced in extreme mysticism's use of the ordinary language of sensory perception to explicate the sixth-sense's mediation of an immediate vision of God, it comes with language such as: the mystic's being one who “finds” God with “the eyes of the soul” and God's being a Presence Whom one “hears speaking” and “feels”.<sup>229</sup> Such “attempts to establish a religious sense or a direct and purely perceptual knowledge of the Divine” by analogy are, Baillie maintains, absurd—on empirical-psychological, philosophical and historical grounds alike. For one, empirical psychology has not verified the existence of

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<sup>227</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 81.

<sup>228</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 81 ff. Baillie's footnote indicates that he is drawing from Coventry Patmore, *The Rod, The Root and The Flower*, edition unidentified.

<sup>229</sup> Baillie points out that adherents to this position can be found in James's chapter on “The Reality of the Unseen”. See William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*, “Lecture III”, in e.g., Mentor edition (New York: The New American Library, Inc., 1958), pp. 58-75.

some sixth sense. Secondly, extreme mysticism's language is "redundant": when it speaks of knowledge of God in the language of physico-sensory "organs or vehicles by which our spirits apprehend the material world" it adds nothing to its contention that knowledge of God is mediated by an "immediate vision". Furthermore, and logically speaking, such tactile language is a "contradiction in terms, the things of the spirit being other than the things of sense and not to be apprehended by sensible means." Extreme mysticism's essentially empirical-reductionist explanation of the epistemological phenomena which give rise to religious faith is also quite damaging—one religious ground: it "run[s] seriously counter to the very fundamental principle that in religion 'we walk by faith and not by sight'." To compound matters, when it emphasizes the mode of apprehension of knowledge of God as being a "sixth sense", it "tends in a serious degree to obscure the *moral* nature of faith", its being rather a crude form of "aesthetic pantheism".<sup>230</sup>

When, then, extreme mysticism advances the belief that immediate knowledge of God is a pre-reflective *sensory* "perception" or "vision" of God, it is not only psychologically and philosophically extreme; it is also, from an historical perspective, extreme in that it breaks from the "authentic mystical theory of religion" (hereafter, "authentic mysticism"). History shows that authentic mysticism has never maintained that immediate knowledge of God is a pre-reflective, "immediate vision" provided by sensory perception<sup>231</sup>; rather, it has contended for a direct knowledge of God characterized by an immediate intuition of God—one mediated by thought.

The central contention for which mysticism stands is certainly that of the direct and intimate nature of God's presence to our souls [i.e. immediate knowledge], but it has

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<sup>230</sup> "It is well known that the neglect of the fundamental moral element in religion was the greatest of all the pitfalls that lay in wait for those schools of mysticism which stressed the immediate and quasi-perceptual character and quasi-perceptual character of the religious vision. Among them religion often seemed bound up not with social duty but rather with a sense of beauty. Defining religion as *aesthesis*, as being essentially a matter of religion, they naturally correlated it with the 'aesthetic' rather than the ethical. Instead of recognising it as an outreaching of man's ethical nature towards a Divine Goodness above and beyond him, they tended to regard it rather as a quasi-sensible contact with a Divine Substance. The result was a kind of aesthetic pantheism." *IOR*, pp. 224-225.

<sup>231</sup> In its most authentic manifestations—in Pythagoras, in Socrates and Plato, in Plotinus, in Erigena, in Bruno, in Spinoza—mysticism has much rather identified with intellectualism than with any sort of sentimentalism or romanticism. *Ibid.*, p. 226.

also been of the very essence of its case that it is not to our *senses* that He is thus present but to our *thoughts* [i.e. is a mediated knowledge]. That in our thoughts we can get closer to God than we can get to the things of sense by seeing and touching and tasting them-on that assurance all Platonism and Neo-Platonism rests. It is all summed up in Plato's saying that God is indeed visible, but visible to the mind alone; and in the equivalent teaching of the latter Platonism that God can be seen indeed, but only 'with the ideas of the mind' [underline emphasizes mine].<sup>232</sup>

Baillie adds,

There is undoubtedly a certain perceptive quality about the highest manifestations of religious insight. We agree with the Platonists that 'the soul has a certain perceptive power of its own'.<sup>233</sup>

What language, then, should be used to describe the mode for direct knowledge of God? Baillie contends that it is "preferable and less confusing . . . to cease altogether (at least in scientific discourse) to speak of a 'religious sense'". Rather, one should speak of knowledge of God as being mediated by a non-sensory "perception" (synonymous with "intuition", according to Baillie). For one, "perception" better communicates both the directness and the indirectness (mediated by the "thoughts" of "insight") of knowledge of God. Secondly, "perception" militates against the confusion which arises when one speaks of knowledge of God as analogous to tactile knowledge (i.e., God's being "seen," "taste," "heard").<sup>234</sup>

#### **4.2.2. Rationalism's Fallacy: An Indirectly-known Really Real via Logical**

##### **Abstraction**

In *ROR* Baillie also argues against the rationalist theory of religion. Mediating theologian that he was, Baillie points out that this theory of religion, like the romantic theory of religion, is indeed "likely to contain some partial truth", though, also like the

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<sup>232</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 227. Baillie here cites the *Corpus Hermeticum* as support. See *ibid.*

<sup>233</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 229.

<sup>234</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 229-230.

romantic theory of religion, disposed to suffer from thought that is “seriously misleading”. A theory of religion which too admits of several variations,

Rationalism might be defined as the tendency to look upon science as the only source of reliable knowledge which is open to us; and the rationalist’s attitude to religion is simply to assume that if it is to have any light at all, it must get it from science . . . from physics, biology and psychology . . . [or] from that more speculative extension of scientific method which is called philosophy or metaphysics.<sup>235</sup>

Baillie traces this theory’s origin back to Plato and Aristotle’s attempts to ground knowledge of reality in inferential inductions derived from the systematic observation and classification of empirically verified “facts”.<sup>236</sup>

Baillie, defending the ordinary person’s theory of religion, criticizes the rationalist theory of religion from a few angles. For one, when it grounds religious belief in metaphysical speculation, it employs a tact and method “largely remote from the ordinary man’s interests”. “The majority of us feel no *obligation* to concern ourselves either with the quickly-shifting panorama of current scientific theories or with the numerous and conflicting philosophical theories that are at any one moment in the field.” In fact, the ordinary person rejects metaphysical speculation with a “perfectly clear conscience”, thinks religion not grounded in logical certainty, and finds such inferential reasoning bankrupt of the “certainty necessary for religion to feed upon” (“faith”). Furthermore, this theory of religion has failed to achieve consensus (i.e., shared logical certainty) amongst even its own scientifically-trained philosophers—this as evidenced in the “apparently perennial opposition of idealism and naturalism”. Nonetheless, were even such concord achieved, and were it also the case that the ordinary person did intuit an obligation to base religion upon “the Law of Cause and Effect [so as] to draw inferences

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<sup>235</sup> *ROR*, p. 49; Cf. *IOR*, p. 174.

<sup>236</sup> “And even the greatest of them, Plato and Aristotle, were convinced that the true way of assuring oneself of the goodness of God was by means of arguments drawn from the philosophical theory of knowledge on the one hand and mathematical astronomy on the other; and Plato was at least convinced that equally strict scientific arguments were available in support of the belief of the future life; but the rest of traditional belief, they said, must be regarded as mere 'myth'", *ibid.*, p. 53.

from the facts observed,” the rational theory of religion would continue to endorse a theory that the ordinary person could not practice: the ordinary person is often exceedingly ignorant of the “kind of knowledge which only scientifically trained philosophers can have in perfection.” Such ignorance applies to many of religion’s great religious visionaries themselves<sup>237</sup> including Jesus. Aristotle’s heralded method of inferential induction by abstraction, deduction, observation and classification of the sensory-observed facts of experience—here is an epistemological and metaphysical program foreign to Jesus. In fact, deed, when it comes to such metaphysical speculation, Aristotle’s sophistication of the thought would appear to far surpasses that of Jesus.<sup>238</sup>

#### 4.2.2.1 Objective, absolute idealism: Hegel’s *Religionsphilosophie*

In *IOR*, Baillie engages specific rationalistic theories of religion, offering passing criticism of some, while spending substantially more time with others. cursory treatments include the thought of Spinoza (1632-1677). Baillie remarks that Spinoza rejects the position that ‘demonstrative science can of itself lead us to a sure belief in the reality of a Being who is worthy to be called “God”’. The “lineal descendants of scholastic orthodoxy”, the Christian apologists Joseph Butler (1692-1752) and William Paley (1743-1805) also receive passing criticism. Baillie’s position, in short, is that although these thinkers correctly make revelation a source of knowledge of God, they wrongly ground religion, as did the Deists before them, in rationalist principles.<sup>239</sup> Some mention is also made of Christian von Wolff’s (1679-1754) rationalist theory of religion: a theory backed by artificial arguments from an “artificial thinker”, it misguidedly repackages Plato’s cosmological argument and Anselm’s ontological argument—and advances arguments neither of which “has fully recovered” from the “crushing criticism” of Kant.

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<sup>237</sup> “Those members of our race whose religious insight has been surest and clearest and bravest [e.g., Jeremiah, Paul, Augustine, Francis] have, as often as not, been men of little learning and less science.” Quotes from *ibid.*, pp. 60-68, *passim*.

<sup>238</sup> “There is a kind of knowledge which we can get in greater perfection from Aristotle than we can from Jesus Christ; and it is clear that this kind of knowledge is what we mean by metaphysics. We shall in fact never be able to persuade men that our Lord and St. Paul were as accomplished and perspicacious metaphysicians as Democritus and Aristotle, Hume and Locke, Mr. Bradley and Mr. Russell,” *IOR*, pp. 182-183.

<sup>239</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 72-74.

Hegel's *Religionsphilosophie*, however, does receive extended treatment in *IOR*. Baillie's argument against Hegel centers upon Hegel's conceptualization of the epistemological relationship between the *Vorstellung* of religion and the *Begriff* of philosophy. Hegel claims that religious knowledge is mere picture knowledge (*Vorstellung*), the cognitive content and essence of which must be interpreted by the *Begriff*. Baillie rejects the position that inferential reasoning (philosophy's pure thought or *Begriff*) ultimately provides knowledge of God, and dismisses Hegel's supporting claim that religious faith (i.e. Religion) lacks cognitive content.

We are forced to conclude . . . that Hegel and the Hegelian theologians do serious injustice to religious faith by thus limiting its own native range of self-expression to the realm of popular, pictorial and materialised thinking . . . Hegel . . . was not afraid of depreciating the cognitive value of faith, because it was not in faith that he put his trust but in philosophy [emphasis mine].<sup>240</sup>

In brief, Baillie supports Hegel's position that religious knowledge comes in the form of an immediate apprehension that is psychologically prior to knowledge derived by metaphysical speculation. Baillie also agrees that religion's immediate knowledge should yield to inferential or indirect knowledge, as a means of elucidating its content (e.g., as in the language: "religion is a matter of doing what's right"). Against Hegel, however, Baillie maintains that the immediate apprehension which gives rise to religious faith is in and of itself *episteme*: religious faith is, for Baillie, an immediate knowledge of God's Presence in and to our *moral* consciousness of value which entails "mental activity" with "cognitive value".

#### 4.2.2.2 Subjective idealism: O. Pfleiderer and H. Rashdall

In Otto Pfleiderer's (1839-1908) philosophy of spirit, and Hastings Rashdall's (1858-1924) personal idealism, Baillie finds rationalist theories of religion which mark

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<sup>240</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 199.

“an advance on Plato, Aquinas and Paley”: each theory rightly recognizes the impossibility of inferring the *goodness* of God “by arguments drawn from the sensible world”, in favor of grounding religion in moral consciousness. However, each theory wrongly insists that one “cannot learn anything about God’s character, and consequently cannot reach any assurance that could in anywise serve as a working basis for religion, with out having to resort to further evidence.” In contradistinction, Baillie maintains that “if the ‘moral argument’ can establish the goodness of God, then surely it must, *a fortiori*, be sufficient to establish His existence.”

Baillie’s criticisms of Pfleiderer and Rashdall’s theories of religion center in part upon their reliance on the Berkeleian theory of sense perception. Baillie maintains that such reliance effectively undermines what theoretical advances are found in their theories of religion, as

It could be of no advantage to religion were the impression to gain ground that the question of the existence of God is connected with the fate of any philosophical hypothesis that is so emphatically, and that is so likely to be so perennially, of the nature of an open question as the Berkeleian analysis of perception.<sup>241</sup>

Berkeley’s theory of sense perception, then, is a hindrance to religion, because its theory of perception is perennially open to debate. Secondly, it is out of touch with the reality of both the ordinary person’s concerns and views on religion: it is, adds Baillie, a theory of sense perception for which “not many of us would be willing to stake our lives”.

The deeper issue for Baillie, however, is that Pfleiderer’s and Rashdall’s particular theories place, as does the rationalist theory of religion in general, undue epistemological constraints on knowledge of God:

*The very most* that any abstract cosmological argument can be conceived as establishing is the existence of a Supreme Soul of some kind or another; *the very least* on which

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<sup>241</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 92-93.

religion has ever managed to subsist, or could possibly manage to subsist, is the assured conviction that this Supreme Soul takes (or can be induced to take) some interest in our welfare and that His values and ours are not hopelessly diverse. Cosmological and epistemological idealism may thus be true, and yet religion may remain an empty dream.<sup>242</sup>

The above remark occurs in the context of Baillie's general criticism of Plato, Aristotle, Butler, and Paley. It raises a fundamental question: Does Baillie actually believe that cosmological and epistemological idealism can establish the existence of a Supreme Soul? He does not.

Every religious man believes, with the primitive animist and with Plato, that behind all things there is Mind and Will, and that therefore what may broadly be called the spiritualistic interpretation of the universe is the one true interpretation of it.<sup>243</sup>

This spiritualistic interpretation, continues Baillie, entails belief in a Supreme Soul who is known by the entire human race as a *personal* being who "cares for man". This Supreme Soul is known by "faith"; and faith, maintains Baillie, resides in humans' moral sense of value. It is here that humans know God as Mind and Will, and not in an intellectual assent to a Berkeleian theory of sense perception.<sup>244</sup>

Baillie's criticism of this sample of rationalist thinkers reflects Baillie's criticism of the rationalist theory of religion as a whole. The rationalist theory of religion is a hindrance to religion, because it maintains that knowledge of God is an indirect knowledge—a product of discursive reasoning. An interrogation of the belief content of the ordinary person, however, suggests that most persons believe that they possess an intuitive direct knowledge of God that is mediated by their moral consciousness of value.

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<sup>242</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 90.

<sup>243</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 88.

<sup>244</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 88-90.



When variations of the rationalist theory of religion, be they grounded in the position that our direct knowledge is knowledge about the external world of nature (e.g., Aristotle, Aquinas) or direct knowledge about the thinking human self (e.g. Hegel, Berkeley, Descartes, Anselm), fail to propound a theory of religion whose description accurately reflects the moral consciousness' epistemological basis for religious consciousness accurately; each invariably affords a depersonalized account of God: God becomes an Inference known indirectly through speculation—not a Presence known directly by religious consciousness as the ground of all being and knowledge. This includes Pfleiderer's and Rashdall's theories of religion. When they maintain that God's character is not directly known, but rather must be established via a logical abstraction directed at the physico-sensory data of experience, they erect a god known by logical abstraction—a god alien to the religious consciousness of those ordinary persons who are humankind.

#### **4.2.3. Theological Intuitionism's Fallacy: A Directly-known and “Immediately Evident” Really Real**

“Theological intuitionism” represents one alternative to rationalist and romantic and approaches to knowledge of God. Whereas romanticism grounds knowledge of God in pre-reflection, and rationalism, in inferential reasoning, theological intuitionism grounds knowledge of God in “immediately evident” *a priori* truths apprehended by cognitive insight. Baillie explains:

The fundamental affirmations of the religious consciousness are, according to this view, ultimate truths of reason which are intuitively apprehended and immediately evident [emphasis mine]. Thus religious knowledge is given a firm and independent foundation of its own; a foundation, that is to say, which is independent of natural science and yet no less firm than that on which natural science rests.<sup>245</sup>

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<sup>245</sup> *IOR*, p. 235.

This theory of the intuitive apprehension of the immediately evident *a priori* traces back to Plato and Aristotle, with a variant of it—that *a priori religious* truths are immediately evident—tracing as far back to the Stoics. The Stoic teaching is that all humans have

‘common notions’ (*koinai ennoiai*, *notitiae communes*), or ‘presumptions’ (*prolepseis*, *praesensiones*), *i.e.*, necessary pre-conceptions of human thinking . . . natural to the human mind (*physikai ennoiai*) or innate (*emphutos*, *innatus*) and quite self-evidencing or ‘gripping’ (*kataleptikos*) . . . [including] the judgments that God exists, that HE is a living being, that He is eternal, that He is well-disposed to man.<sup>246</sup>

#### **4.2.3.1 Troeltsch’s denial: moral consciousness as mediation for religious consciousness**

Baillie’s criticism of theological intuitionism focuses primarily upon the thought of Ernst Troeltsch (1865-1923), as Troeltsch is the “most distinguished representative” of the late nineteenth and early twentieth century quest for the religious *a priori*. Baillie agrees with Troeltsch that religious knowledge is both an immediate knowledge (“intuition”) and a mediated knowledge (“cognitive insight”). Troeltsch’s theory is correct also to refuse to ground religion in “cosmological speculation”; to contend that Kant’s *a priori* conceptions should be open to revision as theology’s understanding of human experience advances; and to maintain, *contra* Kant’s theory of religion, that divine commands do not constitute the only legitimate content of religion’s historical development. Where Baillie disagrees with Troeltsch’s theory of religion is its separation of moral consciousness from religious consciousness: here is an unduly radical break with the Kantian theory of religion. Baillie remarks that while “the phrase ‘religious a priori’ looks at first sight so Kantian, no phrase could really be less in accord with the spirit of the Kantian system, or more calculated to bring confusion into its leading principles.”

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<sup>246</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 236.

Kant's theory of religion, as the Ritschlians correctly interpret, advocates an organic epistemological connection between religious consciousness and the moral consciousness—that is, it does not ground religious faith in a religious consciousness *a priori* of which is epistemologically distinct from the content of moral consciousness. Rather, Kant contends that religious consciousness is mediated by cognitive insight into an *ethical a priori* (i.e. categorical imperative); that this cognitive insight is, in turn, epistemologically linked to humans' immediate intuition of value (i.e. *a priori* consciousness of good and evil); and, that this immediate intuition of value is grounded in moral consciousness—not in an epistemologically distinct religious consciousness.<sup>247</sup>

When, then, Troeltsch maintains that religious consciousness is mediated by immediately intuited knowledge, he rightly mirrors Kant's theory of religion; however, when he separates the organic, epistemological connection between religious consciousness and moral consciousness, this by grounding religious consciousness in an intuition of a distinctly religious *a priori*, he errs in his interpretation of Kant: Kant does not maintain, as does Troeltsch's "theological intuitionism", that the knowledge which mediates assent to religious consciousness is knowledge apprehended from a *religious a priori*.

#### 4.2.3.2 Otto's description of knowledge of God

Baillie's most scathing criticism of theological intuitionism is directed at Rudolf Otto's (1869-1937) formulation thereof. This is because Otto, unlike Troeltsch, actually attempts to isolate the religious *a priori*.

Baillie's argument centers upon "Professor Otto's most baffling conception of the 'non-rational' element in our experience and in the reality to which our experience introduces us." Following W.P. Paterson's criticism of Otto, Baillie maintains that when Otto grounds knowledge of God in religious consciousness' sense of the numinous, he renders knowledge of God 'not accessible to our power of conceiving'. Otto's reliance on what Baillie takes to be a pre-rational sense of the numinous, Otto endorses, as such, an essentially romantic theory of religion. Consequently, Otto's theory of religion is subject

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<sup>247</sup> Troeltsch "reproaches the Ritschlian theologians for speaking as if Kant had emphasized the practical character of religion in order thereby to bring out its validity, whereas [Troeltsch contends] what he really desired to bring out was merely its independence of speculation . . . Yet surely there can be little question that in this matter the Ritschlian are the better Kantians of the two." *Ibid.*, p. 243.

to Baillie's criticisms of that position. Problematic also for Otto's sense of the numinous is that it reads, as Paterson also contends, very much like a 'special religious sense'.<sup>248</sup> Consequently, Otto's description of religious experience is vulnerable to Baillie's criticism of extreme mysticism.

Otto's conceptualization of the epistemological linkage between religious consciousness and moral consciousness is, in particular, "very baffling" for Baillie. "That the characteristic element in religion should be non-rational, while morality should be characteristically rational—that is a combination of views for which it seems impossible to conceive any justification [emphasis mine]."<sup>249</sup> This is not so much a matter of Otto's "apparent equation of the rational with the ethical"; rather, it is because any such justification presupposes a logic which conjoins the rational ethical with the pre-rational religious. When, however, Otto's epistemology tries to link the two with a "very baffling conception of a composite category," its seemingly muddled logic fails to salvage a theory of religion already plagued with a pre-rational religious sense of the numinous.

Baillie, then, finds in Otto's theological intuitionism a rather poor description of religious consciousness, as it fails to elucidate how rational (indirect) and non-rational (direct) knowledges are epistemologically linked between moral and religious consciousness. Otto's epistemological shortcomings make his theory of religion problematic for the academic theologian's logic, as well as for the ordinary person's understanding of religious faith.

The conception of a complex category, half rational and half non-rational, but *a priori* in respect of both its parts and of the conjunction of these parts; the conception of a thought-connection which is immediately self-evident and yet is entirely devoid of logical necessity; the 'most surprising circumstance in the history of religion' that a Being who began by being wholly non-moral should finally be come to be thought of as the arch-guardian of all our *mores*; the splitting up of the thread of religious progress

<sup>248</sup> W. P. Paterson, *The Nature of Religion*, 169 ff., as referenced in *IOR.*, p. 250.

<sup>249</sup> *ROR*, p. 251.

into two utterly distinct and unrelated processes which yet ‘nearly but not quite’ synchronise with one another; and finally, the strange paradox that, while the more we rationalise and moralise our religion the better do we make it, yet by rationalising and moralising it completely we should utterly destroy it—all these are difficulties which can only be solved by letting go altogether the radical distinction between the numinous and the ethical and allowing our knowledge of good and evil an entree into the very holy of holies of our religious faith.”<sup>250</sup>

In passing, Baillie is sympathetic to Otto’s attempt to integrate the moral and religious consciousness, if only because he considers the theory fundamentally wrong in its marginalization of the ethical content of religious consciousness. Indeed, though Baillie is “baffled” by Otto’s logic for connecting immediate, *a priori*, pre-reflective religious truths, said to be intuited by the sense of the numinous, with the contents of a rational, moral consciousness; he allows that “a closer acquaintance” with the Friesian philosophy to which Otto’s theory of religion is indebted, might yield insight into Otto’s attempted conceptual integration of the “‘non-rational’ element in our experience and . . . the reality to which our experience introduces us.” That said, we shall find Baillie, in his latter MT, developing his own idea of the immediacy of knowledge of God and, in the process, continuing to distance his idea of immediacy from the idea of immediacy essential to the epistemology of Otto’s theological intuitionism.<sup>251</sup>

#### 4.2.4. Kant’s Fallacy: God is An Indirectly-Known Logical Implicate

When Baillie turns to Kant’s theory of religion, he centers his criticism upon what he considers Kant’s great contribution to the academic study of religion: Kant’s description of how moral consciousness develops into religious consciousness.<sup>252</sup> What is

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<sup>250</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 253-54.

<sup>251</sup> See *SPG*, p. 54. Baillie’s neglect of Fries provides a somewhat interesting historical note: Fries himself espoused a doctrine of mediated immediacy.

<sup>252</sup> “But later history has shown that the main significance of Kant’s contribution . . . lay precisely in the fact that his ‘Moral Proof’ differed from the old Proofs in the all-important respect that it showed itself capable of being used not only as a buttress and support for religion but as an explanation of its origin, an interpretation of its meaning, and a guide among the manifold competing forms and doctrines of it. Having learned from Schleiermacher a new way of stating the theological question, the Ritschlian School, and others who were not Ritschlians, came to realise that the determinative dependence of religious faith on

its weakness? Baillie identifies it as Kant's explication of "the exact nature of the transition from the moral to the religious outlook". Mounting a line of criticism against Kant's theory of religion—one not unlike his criticism of Otto's theory of religion—Baillie scrutinizes Kant's elucidation of the epistemological "determinative connection" "between the beliefs of religion and the utterances of the moral consciousness."

Baillie's argument against Kant on that issues was presented in Chapter 2's consideration of MI as a possible description of universal revelation, and need not be repeated here.

#### **4.2.5. The Neo-Kantian Fallacy: God's Indirectly-Direct Disclosure to Non-Christian Religious Consciousness: Denied the Christian Theologian**

##### **4.2.5.1 As in Ritschl's method**

Baillie's criticism of the neo-Kantian theory of religion centers somewhat upon Albrecht Ritschl's (1822-1889) thought, particularly that expressed in *The Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation*.<sup>253</sup> This criticism appears in *IOR*; no mention of Ritschl is found in *ROR*.

*IOR* discloses a Baillie somewhat sympathetic to Ritschl's theory of religion, including Ritschl's claim that religious faith is knowledge of an "Ideal" Value that is the Really Real, included.<sup>254</sup> Baillie, for example, is eager to defend aspects of Ritschl's

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moral values was not merely a possible starting-point for the defense of faith, but the source from which faith originally springs and the key to its inmost character." *IOR*, pp. 273-274.

<sup>253</sup> Albrecht Ritschl, *The Christian Doctrine of Justification and Reconciliation: The Positive Development of the Doctrine*, Vol. 3 (Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1900).

<sup>254</sup> Some exposure to Ritschl's thought may be helpful to the reader. Ritschl's theory follows that of Lötze and Kant, in that it distinguishes between the "ideal" and the "real", the "ought" and the "is", "value" and "fact". The major point of departure concerns its contention that the "ideal" *is* the "real". The nature of the epistemological correspondence between the ideal and the real comes out in Ritschl's distinction between "concomitant" and "independent" "value-judgments": humans, being personalities, are conscious of value, including what ought to be. The world, being imperfect, evidences that the intuited ought is not however typically realized. This disparity between what should be and what appears to be creates crisis for the individual. This crisis precipitates a quest to discover what "is"—this in an effort to harmonize one's personality with nature. When such harmony-seeking is primarily motivated by self-interest, "concomitant-value judgments" are brought to bear upon the investigation of perceived "facts". When, however, it's primary motivation is interest in an ideal order, the method employed entails a bearing of such "independent-value judgments" upon the non-sensory facts—as intuited by one's moral consciousness of value. Each method can and does yield knowledge: the theoretical cognition of the former advances scientific knowledge. Theoretical cognition, which arises from concomitant value judgments and the employment of the scientific method, gives rise to scientific discovery, as well as to scientific speculation-

theory of religion—Ritschl’s position that value-judgments provide insight into understanding religion, in particular.<sup>255</sup> Moreover, when Baillie does identify a deficiency in Ritschl’s thought, he offers no severe criticism of it. When, for instance, Baillie addresses the anti-mystical element in Ritschl’s theory of religion, Baillie, whose great affinity for authentic mysticism has been documented, remarks merely that Ritschl’s theory could accommodate mysticism, were Ritschl not falsely inclined to think that all theories of mysticism espouse extreme mysticism’s theory of perception.<sup>256</sup> In fact, Baillie offers no direct criticism of Ritschl’s thought *per se*, but rather typically provides only passing criticism (such as the aforementioned)—and then only amidst a seeming tone of deference to “Ritschl’s greatest contribution to theological science . . . unquestionably the admirably fruitful ‘dogmatic method’ which he used in the interpretation of Christian doctrine.”<sup>257</sup>

This changes, however, when Baillie, writing four years after the publication of *IOR*, confesses in his “Confessions”:

I never had any sympathy with the subjectivist trend in Schleiermacher’s thought, nor with his equation of religion with feeling, nor with his psychological doctrine of the

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based judgments about the positive value of sensory data. Conversely, faith, arises from independent-value judgments grounded in belief in the reality of the values given to one’s moral consciousness of value, and gives rise to religious knowledge, including religion’s value judgments about religion’s essence—“independent value judgments.” *IOR*, p. 283.

<sup>255</sup> For instance, some thinkers (no names provided) argue that Ritschl reduces religion “to an ideal realm which has no existence apart from our thoughts”, on the ground that Ritschl’s states that ‘religious knowledge consists *within* independent value-judgments.’ Baillie maintains that, to the contrary, this statement is a testimony to “the *reality* of the ideal world (or world of values).” As support for the needed corrective, Baillie appeals to Ritschl’s idea of “faith”: it “does assert the reality of its own objects, but its conviction of their reality is always grounded in *a priori* recognition of their value.” He also appeals to Ritschl’s idea of religious faith is used to argue another erroneous interpretation: that Ritschl’s theory endorses a phenomenalist idealism, on the ground that Ritschl teaches that ‘religious knowledge consists *within* independent value-judgments’. These are false claims, contends Baillie. Rather, it is truer to the fact to interpret Ritschl’s grounding of concomitant value judgments in the human desire to ascertain facts pertaining to external nature, and independent value judgments in the human personality’s desire to ascertain the fact of the moral consciousness, as a collective reiteration of the Kantian distinction between “the starry heavens above” and “the moral law within”—that is, not a denial of knowledge about their objective existence. Baillie’s assessment of Ritschl’s theory of religion is found in *IOR*, pp. 282-290, from which these quotations have been taken. See also *ibid.* pages: 30, 36 f., 66, 144, 151, 186, 190, 225, 291, 308, 319, 347, 361, 364, 365, 379.

<sup>256</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 224-225.

<sup>257</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 283.

primordial character of felling as over against thought. . . Nor did I ever have much sympathy with the other aspects of Ritschlianism—its bitter anti-Catholic polemic, its narrow Lutheran Christocentrism, its inhospitable attitude toward whatever religious insight stands outside of the Christian tradition, its Marcionite tendency in regard to the Old testament, its extreme opposition to mysticism, its disqualification of the Greek contribution to Christianity as embodied in the Catholic dogmatic and ecclesiastical system.<sup>258</sup>

We find Baillie, then, now maintaining that Ritschl's fruitful method yields a rather thin and unsavory theological glean. In what specific respect is Ritschl's method unduly narrow? What are its implications for understanding religious consciousness and divine revelation? Ritschl's method limits the Christian theologian's interrogation of religious consciousness to his or her own sect. Baillie, however, staunchly maintains that "religious insight stands outside of the Christian tradition": although the Christian tradition is indeed the highest manifestation of Religion, its tradition is nevertheless both historically and conceptually grounded in religion's broader and more universal development. This is to say that Baillie conceives of the Christian religious community as a participant in a broader religious community that extends across *all* ages and religious sects.<sup>259</sup> The historical tradition of Religion in which the Christian tradition stands, not unlike the moral consciousness which informs its development, is always developing. Accordingly, Christian religious consciousness is dynamic.<sup>260</sup> Consequently, the Christian theological scientist must probe religious consciousness well beyond the Christian community for insight into religion. This requires that the same stay abreast of religious consciousness' developments—essential for the deeper understanding an richer description religious consciousness' fuller exhibition. The epistemological

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<sup>258</sup> "Confessions", p. 52.

<sup>259</sup> To contend with Ritschl that the Christian and the Jew have no common ultimate ground of faith between them is to "exaggerate the distinctness" of Christianity so as to contradict the Christian Church and the Gospels. "Nothing . . . could be well be more unhistorical than such a view. On the whole it must be said that our Lord placed even more emphasis on the basic identity of His Gospel with the traditional religion of His people than on its culminating differences from that religion." *IOR*, p. 61.

<sup>260</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 62. Here we see Baillie advocating something like an "open theological" method. Cf. Keith Ward, *Religion and Revelation* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), pp. 36-42; 339-340.



presuppositions underlying Ritschl's method disallow that knowledge however, as it disallows knowledge of the mediation of knowledge of God beyond one's sect.

Baillie's method (discussed in detail in Chapter 2), unlike Ritschl's method, presupposes that revelation extends to all persons (and, hence, religious communities), and that there are points of contact between Christian religious consciousness and non-Christian religious consciousness. Baillie thinks that presumption justified in part because one cannot draw hard lines of demarcation between the various religious tradition's ideas of religious experience—an implicit epistemological assumption of Ritschl's method, its theological-epistemological constraints included. However, it is Baillie's position that “to stop short anywhere within the religious experience of our race is to express a purely arbitrary preference and to draw a line for ourselves where no line exists.”<sup>261</sup> Assured, then, on historical grounds that no line exists between one religious tradition's ideas of religious experience and another's, Baillie is persuaded that when Ritschl draws such lines, he unduly denies the Christian theologian an understanding of how God's direct Self-disclosure is mediated by non-Christian religious consciousness.

#### 4.2.5.2 As in Herrmann's description of knowledge of God

Whereas Baillie's criticism of Ritschl's neo-Kantianism in *IOR* is somewhat brief, his criticism of Wilhelm Herrmann's (1846-1922) theory of religion in *IOR* is extensive. Here is a marked improvement on Ritschl's neo-Kantianism; and we are reminded that in Herrmann's thought Baillie finds that “the process by which Christian conviction develops in the soul has never been so faithfully set forth. Nor has there been any more distinguished contribution made to theology in our time than that made by Herrmann....”<sup>262</sup> The strength of Herrmann's description of CRE derives in part from its staunch rejection of Ritschl's narrow epistemology. For one, whereas Ritschl's theory of religion rejects the language of “philosophy of religion” and “philosophical theology”, Herrmann's theory of religion rightly, according to Baillie, embraces it. Accordingly, Herrmann's epistemology is “less biblicist” than is Ritschl's, although it rightly maintains that the Bible is normative for understanding Christian faith. Of particular excellence for

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<sup>261</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 62.

<sup>262</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 296.

Herrmann's epistemology is that it, when compared to Ritschl's method, lays "more stress on the recognisability of the common Christian experience shared alike by ourselves to-day and the New Testament writers long ago".<sup>263</sup> What then is the problem for Herrmann's distinguished description of religious experience? We have found that, by Baillie's estimation, Herrmann's otherwise outstanding description of the epistemology of CRE effectively denies that which his idea of revelation and theological method, each of which is an advance on Ritschl's thought, would permit: universal revelation of God and an interrogation of humans' religious consciousness. How? In short, it "breaks the chain of reason", when it denies that the mediation of knowledge of God is an "act of intelligent insight".

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<sup>263</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 56.

## 5. BAILLIE'S LATTER MEDIATING THEOLOGY (1939-60)

We are in the process of determining the focus of Baillie's MT—this with an eye toward resolving the issue of MI's importance for Baillie's MT. In the previous chapter, we took some strides in this direction with our elucidation of the structure and the claims advanced by Baillie's apologetic. We found a Baillie arguing against various theories of religion, focusing his criticism on their epistemologies, and maintaining that these theories' epistemologies make knowledge of God either too direct (immediate) or too indirect (mediated).

This chapter diachronically traces the development of Baillie's latter MT, focusing primarily on the claims advanced by Baillie's apologetic. It begins with an elucidation of Baillie's thought in *Our Knowledge of God* (1939) and subsequently considers Baillie's thought in both his *The Idea of Revelation in Recent Thought* (1956) and posthumously published *The Sense of the Presence of God* (1962). This second stage of a two-stage diachronic trace provides evidence that the mediating theologian was actively relying on MI for his Christian apologetic until his death.

### 5.1. OUR KNOWLEDGE OF GOD (1939)

*Our Knowledge of God* (1939) is pivotal for the development of Baillie's MT. Fergusson provides an excellent summary of the epistemological developments in the work:

In his earlier work, we see the influence of the post-Kantian philosophy of Pringle-Pattison in which all knowledge is dependent upon the primary data of experience. An epistemology in which the conscious subject reflects upon and interprets the primary deliverances of moral experience is implicit in his theological strategy. We now find this being replaced by a critical realism in which experience and self-consciousness are firmly set within the social and physical environment inhabited by the physical subject.<sup>264</sup>

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<sup>264</sup> Fergusson, "Orthodox Liberal", p. 141.

Fergusson notes that the epistemological shift in *Our Knowledge of God* (hereafter, *OKG*) accordingly, “paves the way for a stronger theology of revelation than had hitherto been apparent in Baillie’s theology”. The work also lays the groundwork for what now is, and will become, an increased Christocentrism in Baillie’s critical thought. In particular, the work’s elucidation of “the way in which the incarnation and the cross mediate the glory of God” makes it “an important development in Baillie’s thinking which brings with it a greater emphasis on special revelation and the contextuality of all human knowledge”.<sup>265</sup> These epistemological and christological developments in *OKG* would impact Baillie’s subsequent thought, as evidenced in *The Idea of Revelation in Recent Thought* and the *Sense of the Presence of God*. Works which “display [Baillie’s] continuing interest in the concept of revelation,” they also evidence an “increasing Christocentrism in his thinking towards the end of his life”.<sup>266</sup> Given the developments in *OKG*, as well as the works anticipation of the trajectory of Baillie’s latter thought, it is no wonder that some consider *OKG* Baillie’s “most important work”.<sup>267</sup>

At the very center of Baillie’s epistemological shift, increased Christocentrism, and now stronger theology of revelation, lies MI. A concept first explicitly mentioned in *OKG*, it is, as we shall soon find, also important for other developments in Baillie’s thought, including Baillie’s increased dialogue with Barth.

### 5.1.1. Neo-Orthodoxy’s Problem: No Immediate, Universal Knowledge of God

It is not as if Baillie was previously unfamiliar with Barth’s thought; Baillie had defended Barth’s thought, at points, in the 1920’s,<sup>268</sup> had met with Barth in 1930 (one year after *IOR*’s publication), and had criticized Barth’s doctrine of revelation (in particular), in his 1933 “Confessions”.<sup>269</sup> In *OKG*, however, one finds Baillie debating Barth with full force. This debate, as we shall see, would carry over into Baillie’s *Sense of the Presence of God*.

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<sup>265</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 140-143.

<sup>266</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 148.

<sup>267</sup> Cheyne, p. 35.

<sup>268</sup> “Some Reflections on the Changing Theological Scene”, *Union Seminary Quarterly Review*, 12, 1957.

<sup>269</sup> “Confessions”, pp. 33-59.

In *OKG*, Baillie advocates positions which suggest his affinity for neo-orthodox theology. For one, Baillie commends Barth's emphasis on God's transcendence. Secondly, Baillie agrees that knowledge of God is a matter of divine initiative. Thirdly, Baillie endorses a doctrine of the verbal inspiration of the Bible, not unlike Barth. Fourthly, Baillie shares Barth's disdain for natural theology's attempt to establish God's existence. In light thereof, that Baillie's doctrine of revelation may have much in common with Barth's (latter) idea of revelation seems, at least on the surface, a reasonable suggestion.<sup>270</sup>

In addition, Baillie is quick to affirm the value of Barth's dogmatic theological method for modern Christian thought, when Baillie considers the "spiritual situation" of the modern western world: it is one under the "delusion" of its own "self-sufficiency"—a consequence of its "repression" of knowledge about Jesus Christ. This delusion has not gone unchallenged; indeed, both God and Barth have had something to say about it: God has continually pricked the modern person's consciousness with God's continual self-disclosure in and thereto;<sup>271</sup> Barth, confronting the modern west with his routine dogmatic proclamation of the Christian Gospel, has disclosed the "hidden canker of [its] uneasy conscience" while heightening the western world's consciousness of God's transcendence, in particular. In this regard, Barth's dogmatic theology has proven an antidote for an ailing modern society.<sup>272</sup> It has also proven a much-needed antidote for an ailing Christian theology: Barth's refusal to debate God's existence has reawakened Christian theology to the power of the Gospel proclamation.<sup>273</sup>

Barth's theological prescription hardly constitutes a *panacea*, however, according to the Baillie. Indeed, it cannot be, as Barth's is misdiagnosis of the "spiritual situation" of the West. A position already advanced by Baillie in his 1933 "Confessions", it receives fuller expression in *OKG*.

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<sup>270</sup> Fergusson, "Orthodox Liberal", pp. 123-154.

<sup>271</sup> "When God reveals Himself to man, then a characteristic disturbance is set up in the human soul and in the life of our human society, and that disturbance is what we mean by religion". *OKG*, p. 3.

<sup>272</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 12.

<sup>273</sup> "During the last several generations we who preach the gospel have been far too ready to assume that the modern man had developed an immunity against its appeal. We have approached him apologetically. . . . And now it would seem, that we are learning from our mistake." *Ibid.*, p. 14.

Dr. Barth is guilty of unduly simplifying the delicate complexity of the spiritual situation with which we have here to do, and that in his anxiety to recover and conserve one precious evangelic truth he is going far towards surrendering another.<sup>274</sup>

The truth which Barth's doctrine of revelation recovers is that God transcends creation, and is revealed most profoundly in Jesus Christ; the truth which Barth surrenders, is that God is immanently present in and to all of creation's consciousness. Here is Barth's oversimplification of the spiritual situation of the West; here is what renders his medicine hard to swallow theologically for Baillie; and here, Baillie maintains, is a doctrine of revelation alien to the moral consciousness of the entire human race.

Believing at this time that the modern theologian must work through Barth's thought,<sup>275</sup> Baillie does just that. Taking aim at Barth's denial of an *Anknüpfungspunkt* between God and all humans, Baillie contends that this doctrine readily evidences Barth's misdiagnosis of the human situation: there must be, argues Baillie, some ontological connection between unregenerate humans and God; otherwise, the "uneasy consciousness" of unregenerate persons would not be able to appropriate the revelation mediated by the Gospel proclamation—Barth's own proclamation included.<sup>276</sup> Baillie, of course, does not think human nature unflawed: he readily agrees, for example, with Barth's position that both humans' rationality ("goodness") and responsibility ("freedom of will") are corrupt. However, he firmly rejects the neo-orthodox position that the *imago dei* has been obliterated to such an extent that neither the form of its rationality (Barth) nor the material content of its goodness (Barth and Brunner) remains. This is out of keeping with an accurate reading of the spiritual situation: it evidences that the modern person, be that person regenerate or unregenerate, does well "participate" in the divine likeness—that humans are not entirely qualitatively distinct from the "Wholly Other" whose transcendence Barth rightly emphasizes.

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<sup>274</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 19.

<sup>275</sup> John Baillie, "Some Reflections on the Changing Theological Scene", *Union Seminary Quarterly Review*, 12, 1957, p. 7. Cf. *SPG*, pp. 254-255.

<sup>276</sup> "But the great shadow of the conscience of the modern West is the shadow of the Cross." "It is quite impossible for any man to live in this country to-day as if Christ had never come." *OKG*, pp. 13 and 8.

But the truth of it is surely that the doctrine of the *imago dei*, far from being a doctrine derived from any direct knowledge of what happens at creation, is a doctrine suggested to us by, and derived by us from, our knowledge of present human nature. . . .  
 . . . The doctrine of the *imago dei* has its basis in the fact that our existent human nature presents itself to us, not as simply a bad thing, but as *a good thing spoiled*.<sup>277</sup>

Baillie's position, that all humans are ontologically connected with God, albeit imperfectly, mirrors his epistemological position that all humans have an immediate knowledge of God—that which Barth's epistemology denies. And it is here—Barth's rejection of universal immediate knowledge of God—that Baillie mounts his most stringent argument against Barth: here is the root of Barth's misreading of the spiritual situation of the West, and his consequent over-prescription of dogmatic proclamation as a cure for modern western society's spiritual ills.

In the case of Dr. Barth himself, his rejection of apologetic seems to be based, not on his recognition of an implicit knowledge of God which requires no argument to support it, but on his denial that there is any implicit knowledge which could serve as a starting-point for argument [emphasis mine].<sup>278</sup>

Hence, while Baillie's argument against Barth's dogmatic theology does center in part on the Barth's anthropology, whose doctrine of the *imago dei* misrepresents the spiritual situation of the West, the issue for Baillie is an epistemological one: Barth denies that all humans having implicit knowledge of God.<sup>279</sup>

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<sup>277</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 21 - 22.

<sup>278</sup> *Ibid.*, note #1, p. 15.

<sup>279</sup> "I cannot believe that Dr. Barth's account correctly reproduces the human situation as we actually find it existing. I cannot believe that he is right in thus severing the connexion between the doctrine of the *imago dei* and the doctrine of revelation." *Ibid.*, p. 22.

Accordingly, Baillie also takes aim at Barth's doctrine of revelation, as evidenced for Barth's misreading of the spiritual situation of the West. Here, again, Baillie centers his criticism on Barth's rejection of a universally immediate knowledge of God. Barth, observes Baillie, denies universal immediate knowledge of God, in favor of an idea of knowledge of God whose scope of mediation is substantially more limited: knowledge of God is solely mediated by knowledge about, and of, the Mediator, Jesus of Nazareth, according to Barth. Baillie agrees that the Mediator is God's supreme self-disclosure in history, and that a distinctly Christian knowledge of God is no mere knowledge about Jesus: Christian knowledge of God must be mediated by "our direct personal encounter with Him in the Person of Jesus Christ His Son our Lord."<sup>280</sup> However, to limit the mediation of revelation of God's self-disclosure to Jesus is to suppose that some humans know nothing of God's grace. This is problematic for both Barth's reading of the spiritual situation and for Barth's theology of revelation.

Barth's theology of revelation, to its credit: contends that revelatory content (*contra* Brunner) presupposes no "absolute distinction" between a 'sustaining' grace through general revelation and a special, saving grace "through Christ alone" ("special revelation"); does not separate the 'material form' and 'content' of the *imago dei*; and does not as such commit one to the rejection of the position "that the capacity for spiritual life was given first and the reality of it afterwards". Barth's theology also rightly maintains that God's grace is such "that the capacity to receive revelation ... is given in and with revelation itself". However, when Barth maintains, "Man was not reasonable prior to his apprehension of the first inkling of truth, but in that apprehension his rationality is first born," he advances a position based on the faulty supposition that extent of God's grace limits the mediation of rationality and truth only to those with knowledge about Jesus Christ—and this only when humans come to saving faith in Jesus Christ.<sup>281</sup> However, it is Baillie's position that it is only because all humans have immediate knowledge of God, that the Gospel message can mediate God's Presence to, and become revelatory for, humans. Consequently, when Barth conceives of revelation as a vertical disclosure of God's presence at only one point in history, he not only limits the

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<sup>280</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 143.

<sup>281</sup> See *ibid.*, pp. 19-34; 102.



mediation of knowledge of God (divine action) to knowledge of the Mediator (revelation); he unduly truncates, so to speak, the horizontal breadth of divine action whose Self-disclosure and accompanying grace enables the very rationality and truth wherewith divine action can be appropriated as revelation. In this regard, Baillie thinks it better to side with Brunner's position: God's grace extends to the human race as a whole in the form of a "revelation in creation" [which includes] . . . 'the law written in the hearts' of the Gentiles and . . . God's manifestation of his invisible nature to them 'through the things that he made'".<sup>282</sup>

What, then, should a better theology of the revelation in creation include, according to Baillie? Fundamentally, it should maintain that all humans have the implicit knowledge denied by Barth's idea of revelation—in several respects. Specifically, it should be maintained that all persons have at least implicit knowledge of: (1) being "aware of not living up to its own interior and acknowledged nature";<sup>283</sup> (2) evil's presence within humans' "inner" and "outer worlds"; (3) God's being the "deliverer" from the throes of human exigency; (4) *a priori*, moral "conceptions" of this "Ideal Personality", including God's attributes of "goodness", "infinity", "eternity", "omniscience", "omnipresence"<sup>284</sup> "immutability", "omnipotence", and "impassability"—logically *a priori* conceptions which, being not inborn-innate, are couched rather in humans' implicit knowledge of God's unconditional moral demand—a knowledge which, by God's grace, is disclosed through God's *continuous*, direct self-disclosure to individuals "in, with and under" human experience. This implicit or immediate knowledge of God does not require mediated knowledge about the event of Jesus Christ; it can be mediated, and is mediated, by the individual's knowledge about any number of events. This includes knowledge "about" and "of" the world, others, and oneself.<sup>285</sup> All of this is, also by God's grace, possible as God has left no person *mente alienati*, but has provided immediate knowledge of God to all. Indeed, to contend that non-regenerate persons have no knowledge of God is not only to objectify humans by

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<sup>282</sup> Emil Brunner, *Offenbarung und Vernunft* (1941), I, IIA (p.58 ff. Eng. trans.). Cited in *SPG*, p. 187.

<sup>283</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 23.

<sup>284</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 251.

<sup>285</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 258.

denying that each is “personality”; it is to depersonalize the personal relationship between God and all humans.

Barth, then, oversimplifies the spiritual situation of the West, because he denies that all humans have immediate knowledge of God. It is a denial backed by an anthropology foreign to the human situation, a doctrine of revelation excessively narrow, and a concept of God’s grace which unduly limits the scope of God’s grace. A more astute reading of the human situation, however, attests to all humans having, by God’s grace, knowledge of God. Barth’s otherwise welcome dogmatic-theological affirmation of God’s transcendence comes with an unfortunate theological surrender: God’s immanent and continually disclosed Presence in and to all humans, as “in, with and under” a sacramental universe.

In passing, Brunner’s thought serves Baillie’s purposes in *OKG*. With regard to Baillie’s debate with Barth, Brunner’s demarcation of “revealed knowledge” of God from “natural knowledge” about God provides Baillie a working structure with which he can articulate his position that *all* persons have an immediate, personal knowledge of God in their moral consciousness of value. It also provides Baillie a means for rejecting Barth’s position that knowledge of God can be established by natural theology. Furthermore, it provides a means for Baillie to resume his debate with the rationalist theory of religion over this issue: the epistemological relationship between direct and indirect knowledge for knowledge of God. Maintaining that all humans have an immediate knowledge of Personality, Baillie, we shall now see, contests the rationalist theory’s epistemological claim that some learned humans can arrive at inferentially-derived knowledge about God.<sup>286</sup>

### **5.1.2. The Rationalist Theory of Religion’s Problem: No Immediate Knowledge of Personality**

In *OKG*, Baillie picks up his long-standing debate with the rationalist theory of religion over the issue of knowledge of God. Here we find that, whereas in his early thought he primarily employs the language of indirect and direct to refer to knowledge of God and the ground of religion, Baillie now employs more readily the language of

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<sup>286</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 35.

mediated and immediacy. Baillie's line of criticism remains the same, however: the rationalist theory of religion delivers, at best, only an indirect knowledge about an impersonal God.

Anselm's ontological proof is one such target in *OKG*. Baillie, who makes but passing criticism of the rationalist Anselm in *IOR*, now concedes that the proof is, psychologically speaking, rather powerful. Its power derives from its ability to describe the inward quality of religious experience and to drive the proof's contemplator toward a deeper reflection upon God's presence in and to the soul. As Baillie puts it: "The faith or belief which [Anselm] considers must precede rational understanding is very far from a blind acceptance of tradition; rather it is such an inward laying hold of God as, following upon the gracious act by which God lays a hold of us, forms the secret of the deepest personal religion."<sup>287</sup> The proof also rightly operates on the assumption that humans can have a direct knowledge of God via insight into the "logical structure" "implicitly contained" in faith's "mental processes". Add that the proof presupposes knowledge of God's being inherently "personal", and the argument *res cogitans* proves a marked improvement over Aquinas's argument for God's existence *res extensa*.

Baillie's fundamental difficulty with the epistemology that undergirds Anselm's proof is its supposition that grounds for religious faith can be established by logical demonstration: for although the proof does beckon reflection upon God's immediate, personal presence in and to the soul, its ultimate objective is to move beyond such a stimulation of subjective reflection to the logical establishment of God's objective existence—this by demonstrating "that the form of the conception of God in our minds is already to believe in His reality." When, however, Anselm attempts to ground religious faith in the understanding (*intelligere* and *comprehende*), he proposes a criterion for the validation of religious faith that conflicts with the deliverances of religious consciousness properly understood. "And it is just here, as I believe, that we must part company with him."<sup>288</sup> Specifically,

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<sup>287</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 135.

<sup>288</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 134-143, *passim*.

If our faith does not rest on argument, then how can the construction of an argument lead, as St. Anselm says it does, to the correct understanding of that faith? The only possible answer would be to claim that the argument which was afterwards hit upon was no more than a clear explication of a logical structure which had been already implicitly contained in the mental process by which faith was originally contained [emphasis mine]...<sup>289</sup>

Baillie concurs, of course, that religious faith is mediated by mental processes; but he insists that such mediation entails reflection upon a logical structure latently embedded in moral consciousness' (as opposed to theoretical reason's) immediate knowledge of logical *a priori's*—"conceptions" which, via immediate knowledge of God, are believed by the moral consciousness to correspond epistemologically to God, the knowledge of Whom is "logically prior" to all human knowledge (including knowledge about Anselm's proof). It is upon these conceptions, and the God whom moral consciousness believes to exist, that humans reflect; and it is in this "logical structure" that humans find ground for the belief in God that characterizes assent to religious consciousness—not in a theoretical speculation whose discursive reasoning mediates indirect knowledge about an ontological proof. To put it differently, the chief weakness of Anselm's proof is that it attempts to ground religious faith in second-order (indirect) mental processes, as opposed to grounding it in humans' first-order (direct) knowledge of God. This, in Baillie's mind, effectively negates knowledge of Personality.

Baillie's criticisms of Aquinas's thought also center upon a supposedly faulty conceptualization of the epistemological relationship between immediate and mediated knowledge for knowledge of God. That this is Baillie's central apologetic concern comes out in Baillie's remarks that

We are directly challenging St. Thomas's doctrine that we have no knowledge of God *per se* but only *per ea quae facta sunt*—through his effects in the world of nature, and are allying ourselves rather with . . . the doctrine

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<sup>289</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 141.

represented by St. Bonaventure's dictum that God is present to the soul itself (*Deus praesens est ipsi animae*).<sup>290</sup>

Baillie elaborates on the underlying tension in Aquinas's thought, observing that

According to St. Thomas, no *direct* knowledge of any existence save the world of nature as perceived by the five senses. Our knowledge of all non-sensible realities is discursive in character, being regarded by inference from the things we can see and touch.<sup>291</sup>

Baillie subsequently brings his criticism of Aquinas's theology into sharper focus:

[Aquinas's] teaching was that all of our knowledge of God is indirect and mediate, and that the immediate knowledge of God proper to the state of Glory is completely impossible to us in our earthly condition [emphasis mine].<sup>292</sup>

Problematic for Aquinas's understanding of the epistemological relationship between direct knowledge and indirect knowledge for knowledge of God, is an "indirect and mediate" knowledge about the "world of nature" (i.e., Aquinas's proofs) cannot prove the existence of Personality—any more than can direct knowledge about the human mind (i.e., Anselm's proof; Descartes' method). At best, this half of Aquinas' mediaeval synthesis can provide only indirect knowledge about effects—and, then only, of an impersonal Inference. Religious faith, however, thrives on direct knowledge of the character of Presence, maintains Baillie, as humans do have, *contra* Aquinas's epistemology, an ontologically direct (though epistemologically indirect) knowledge of God's nature (e.g., God is Goodness)—a direct knowledge of God being a personal God.

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<sup>290</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 132.

<sup>291</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 109.

<sup>292</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 193.

Baillie's criticism of Descartes centers upon what Descartes claims to be epistemologically direct and indirect for our knowledge of God. In one respect, Descartes' revolution "registered a very real gain. God was now recognized as a Reality who more directly confronts us than do the things of sense, and our certainty of him became prior to the certainties of science rather than dependent upon them."<sup>293</sup> However, it also registered a "very serious loss".

Exactly where, then, did Descartes' mistake lie? It lay, surely, in supposing that the consciousness of the self preceded the consciousness of the not-self, or could remain after the consciousness of the not-self had disappeared. The truth is that only in the knowledge of what is other than myself am I able to rise to knowledge of my own existence at all. Descartes agreed that the very existence of his doubt implied the existence of himself who doubted; what he should have argued was that this implied the indubitable presence to his experience of something not himself which should be his standard for judging whether other things were doubtful or not doubtful; for it is clear that if he had no sense of reality he could have no disposition to doubt.<sup>294</sup>

Descartes' epistemology's downfall, then, is twofold: (1) it makes knowledge of oneself humans' most direct knowledge; (2) it seeks to pass from this type and ground of knowledge to knowledge of God.

### **5.1.3. Romantic Theology's Problem: Immediate Knowledge as Saving Knowledge**

The mediating theologian's earlier thought, as we have found, derides William James's "new-fangled concept of the subconscious", on the ground that it adds nothing to James's theory that knowledge of the Really Real is "pre-reflective" knowledge. In *OKG*, however, Baillie appears to rely most heavily on his own version of "pre-reflective" knowledge as support for his thought. For example, Baillie's criticism of Barth and Aquinas, for instance—specifically, their mutual rejection of universal

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<sup>293</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 152.

<sup>294</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 153.

immediate knowledge of God—presupposes that humans do have a knowledge of God that is ordinarily beyond humans' threshold of awareness.

Here, then, is an important development in Baillie's MT. A brief digression into Baillie's thoughts on the subconscious will prove helpful, as it will illuminate: what immediate knowledge of God means to Baillie's MT at this stage of development; document Baillie's continued criticism of the romantic theory of religion's take on the epistemological relationship between mediated knowledge and immediate knowledge for knowledge of God; and document Baillie's concessions toward the romantic theory in *OKG* and his latter thought.

Baillie's conceptualization of subconscious knowledge of God comes out in his argument against atheism. Here one finds a mediating theologian yet again coming to the aid of the ordinary person.

Many men of our time are . . . in the position that, while they do (as I should contend) believe in God in the bottom of their hearts, they cannot think how to answer the arguments which certain prevailing philosophies direct against His reality, and are thus led to doubt Him with the 'top of their minds'.<sup>295</sup>

Baillie, still keenly interested in psychological theory, turns to Freudian psychology and to Cook Wilson's philosophy to challenge the intellectual atheism that challenges Baillie's position that all humans have an implicit knowledge of God, the atheist included. Baillie maintains, following Freud, that all humans have a subconscious which seeks "to banish our less reasonable and reputable desires from self-consciousness, and repress them in the subliminal mind. . . ." Such repression occurs both on an individual basis and in societies as a whole. Indeed, "The surface life of our society may appear to be unruffled, but this is only because the disturbances are being forcibly held down in the interior depths of the human minds." Baillie, breaking with Freud, extends this repression to include a repression of knowledge of God. Attributing the West's banishment of

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<sup>295</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 62-63.

knowledge of God to the depths of the “subliminal mind” to ideological-historical, cognitive-psychological and moral-anthropological factors,<sup>296</sup> Baillie advances the claim that atheism essentially does not exist: when atheists deny God’s existence, what is ensuing is merely atheist’s intellectual denial of God’s existence with the “top of their heads”, and not a denial of God’s existence as such: everyone, maintains Baillie, believes in God with the “bottom of their hearts”. As support for his claim, Baillie appeals to Cook Wilson’s general position that “not only may men’s faces and their words belie their thoughts, but likewise their conscious thoughts may belie the ‘subconscious’ workings of their minds.” The deeper issue, however, is that this epistemological move allows the apologist Baillie to defend his position that all humans have a universal immediate knowledge of God.

Why, then, should we, who believe in God, think it necessary to allow that because some men, the so-called atheists, deny the existence of God, God cannot therefore be directly present to their consciousness as He is to ours?<sup>297</sup>

Accordingly, Baillie argues that the human mind is aware of God’s Presence, but that some minds can become unaware that it is aware of God’s Presence.

All belief must in some sense be conscious—unconscious beings cannot entertain beliefs—but all belief need be

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<sup>296</sup> Baillie finds what I am calling ideological-historical evidence in “ancient Greece“, “western Europe since the Renaissance,” and “especially in the nineteenth century”: their “naturalist and humanistic philosophies” have in particular “failed to arrive at any conviction of His reality. . . [conducting] us towards a conception of universal being from which God seems to be definitely excluded.” As concerning psychological factors, Baillie speculates that repression of knowledge of God often correlates positively with a breakdown in one’s noetic structure: the inability to maintain a “deep-seated belief in God” when either inferentially-derived grounds for God’s existence fail, or when counter claims to God’s existence cannot be accommodated and reconciled with belief in God’s existence. Baillie instances himself as having questioned God’s existence with the “top of his mind”. Ultimately, however, consciousness’ repression of knowledge of God is the byproduct of the moral corruption of a fallen humanity. In this regard, Baillie goes against Plato’s claim that the denial of God’s existence reduces to human finitude. See *ibid.*, pp. 47-53.

<sup>297</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 51.



conscious of itself. We may have an awareness of a certain reality without being aware of that awareness. And we may therefore, without ceasing to be aware of such a reality, set about denying its existence—and that in all good faith.<sup>298</sup>

All humans, then, are immediately aware of God’s presence by God’s direct disclosure in and to the soul; however, the human mind can become consumed with second-order reflection about the logical possibility of God’s existence to the extent that, for want of an ability to reconcile competing “truth” claims “about” the logical possibility of God’s existence with knowledge “of” the “reality” of God, such immediate knowledge is repressed.

Baillie’s reliance on Freud and Wilson is also used to support the epistemological undergirding for his doctrine of *fides salvifica*. The above quote, taken from Baillie’s discussion of this issue, addresses the subconscious mind’s role in the mediation of *fides salvifica*: Baillie, we recall, contends in *IOR* that immediate knowledge of God (1) is available to the moral consciousness of all humans and (2) epistemologically correspondent to logically *a priori* “conceptions” of “Ideal Personality”. Baillie develops this idea of immediacy further still in *OKG*: indeed, one need not even be consciously aware of one’s immediate knowledge of God (1-2) in order to possess saving faith. An epistemological move with negative implications for MI’s present-day epistemological value,<sup>299</sup> it testifies to an apparent concession toward the romantic theory of religion in *OKG*.

We recall that Baillie’s early MT characterizes the romantic theory of religion as one whose epistemology makes knowledge of the Really Real essentially “pre-reflective”. In *OKG*, however, Baillie’s epistemology is clearly relying on pre-reflective “subliminal” knowledge of God—something which Baillie’s epistemology logically equates with knowing God “in the bottom of the heart”—as support for the universal immediate knowledge of God that is crucial for Baillie’s theory of religion. It is also important for his efforts as a mediating theologian. For Baillie’s reliance on this

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<sup>298</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 51.

<sup>299</sup> As addressed in Chapter 7.

romantic-like epistemological move is not only showcased in Baillie's mediation between Christianity, the ordinary person, and the atheist, Baillie parades it in his would-be mediation between orthodox Protestant and Catholic doctrines of saving faith. For instance, Baillie observes in *OKG* that each tradition maintains that saving faith (i.e. religious faith) must be mediated by knowledge about propositions and *conscious* assent to them. (We have already witnessed Baillie arguing against Aquinas on this issue in *OKG*—Aquinas makes religious faith, at least the Aristotelian foundation for it, contingent upon indirect knowledge.) In the same work, he chastens the epistemology of his own theological inheritance, the Reformed Protestant tradition: it wrongly maintains that that *fides salvifica* must be mediated by conscious assent to propositional knowledge.<sup>300</sup> Here, again, is a mediating theologian whose apologetic concern is with the epistemological relationship between indirect knowledge and direct knowledge for (saving) knowledge of God.

It should be said, that Baillie's defense of the ordinary man, does not come with the overt claim that Protestant and Catholic theology are contributing to the atheists' denial of God "with the top of their heads"; however, Baillie would seem to imply as much: for when these traditions, broadly defined, insist that saving knowledge of God must be mediated by consciousness knowledge about Jesus Christ, their epistemologies disallow the possibility that God speaks directly to the "hearts" of persons devoid of the indirect knowledge about God's being in Jesus Christ that is epistemologically necessary for saving knowledge.<sup>301</sup>

It is apparent, then, that Baillie's criticism of, if also indebtedness to, the romantic theory of religion in *OKG* is one directed at its conceptualization of the epistemological relationship between indirect and direct knowledge in (saving) knowledge of God.

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<sup>300</sup> "If we ask why such a body as the Westminster Assembly found it difficult to conceive of an assent that was not conscious of itself than of a trust that was not thus self-conscious, the answer is apparent. It is that the members of that Assembly were too intellectualistic in their interpretation of the Christian faith, too much in love with credal orthodoxy, too ready to understand revelation as consisting in communicated information. But for us there is no reason why we should not extend the distinction between *fides directa* and *fides reflexa* to the element of *assensus* as well as to that of *fiducia*, and speak of an unconscious assent . . . We who know that we believe in God have received no right to deny that His saving power is at work also in the lives of those who do not know that they believe in Him—or in His Son Jesus Christ our Lord." *Ibid.*, pp. 72-73.

<sup>301</sup> "The man who doubts or denies God with the top of his mind may nevertheless possess in himself, *the forma fidei essentialis*." *Ibid.*, pp. 75.

## 5.2. *THE IDEA OF REVELATION IN RECENT THOUGHT (1956)*

*The Idea of Revelation in Recent Thought* (hereafter, *IRRT*) is a revision of Baillie's 1954 Bampton Lectures. Baillie indicates that it is not a fully systematic treatment of the subject, but "might be described as an extended review" of recent thought on revelation. Accordingly, this work's length, content, and depth of analysis tend to be somewhat thin. Nevertheless, its consideration is important. For one, it evidences a mediating theologian still preoccupied with the issue of the epistemological relationship between indirect and indirect knowledge for knowledge of God (e.g., Baillie's criticism of Farrer and Temple). It also evidences Baillie's reliance on MI, almost two decades after *OKG*'s publication.

### 5.2.1. Austin Farrer: Direct Knowledge of Mere Images from God

Though *IRRT* is primarily a historical-expository work, Baillie provides two extended criticisms within it—criticisms of the thought of Austin Farrer and William Temple. Following the "historical reminder" of the idea of revelation's development in Christian thought (Chapter 1), Chapter 2 explicates the "divine self-disclosure". It is here that Baillie provides the chapter's most sustained argument, Baillie's argument against Farrer's position that 'divine truth is supernaturally communicated to men in an act of inspired thinking which falls into the shape of certain images.'<sup>302</sup> Baillie generally welcomes Farrer's emphasis on imagination as a mode of apprehension of knowledge of God; however, he staunchly rejects Farrer's epistemological "exaggeration of the distinctness" between imagination and the intellect. Speaking to that differentiation, Baillie remarks that

This, however, can be only if it is believed that, whereas all propositional knowledge apprehension of truth contains an element of possible error, the images are given directly [emphasis mine] by God and contain no such element.<sup>303</sup>

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<sup>302</sup> Austin Farrer, *The Glass of Vision* (Westminster [London], 1948), p.57, as cited in Baillie, *IRRT*, p. 37.

<sup>303</sup> *IRRT*, p. 38.

As support for his line of criticism, Baillie offers the following.

- (1) “It is difficult to know why we should suppose that [images] are directly the medium of revelation in a sense in which [propositional truths] are not”;
- (2) Farrer’s idea of revelation presupposes that human imagination, and its operation upon non-propositional symbols, is less fallible than the “judgment-forming intellect” which operates upon “propositional truths”—without sufficient ground;
- (3) “It offers us something less than personal encounter and person communion” with God, when it makes “implanted images” the primary medium for knowledge of God.
- (4) It gives rise to a “mechanical idea of inspiration”, as it presupposes that the prophets and apostles received revelation when “God directly injected into their mind archetypal images”.<sup>304</sup>

Farrer, then, is claimed to advance a faulty idea of revelation, as it epistemologically reduces direct knowledge of God to direct knowledge about images from God.

### **5.2.2. William Temple: No Direct Knowledge of Personality**

Chapter 3’s exposition of the New Testament’s thought on “aspects of the revealed content” instances Baillie’s enduring epistemological position that revelation is a direct knowledge of God and not a direct knowledge about propositions. Baillie’s conclusion for the chapter, for instance, is that revealed content “is not a body of information or doctrine” but “God Himself”. “When”, for example, “we read of ‘the revelation in Jesus Christ,’ what we are to understand is that God Himself is in Him.”<sup>305</sup>

Chapter 4 explicates the mediation of divine action and revelation, laying emphasis on the “mighty acts of God.” The chapter’s opening paragraph announces that Baillie will emphasize that the mighty acts which mediate God’s Presence are acts which mediate a direct or immediate knowledge of God:

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<sup>304</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 36-40.

<sup>305</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 60.

No affirmation runs more broadly throughout recent writing on our subject than that which in the last chapter we were concerned to make, namely that all revelation is given, not in the form of directly communicated information, but through events occurring the historical experience of mankind, events which are apprehended by faith as the ‘mighty acts’ of God, and which therefore engender in the mind of man such reflective knowledge of God as it is given to him to possess [emphasis mine].<sup>306</sup>

Accordingly, Baillie’s speaks to how direct knowledge of God is, paradoxically, a knowledge mediated by concrete events. Addressing also direct knowledge of God’s corollary, that knowledge of God is personal knowledge, Baillie elucidates how reflective knowledge of God, as mediated in particular by knowledge about nature, relates to Christian faith.

And the question is whether [nature] could reveal to men the Living God who created and sustains it, if God had not already shown, or did not at the same time show, Himself to them as something more than the Creator and Sustainer of such an impersonal system.<sup>307</sup>

This question is one put to Temple, with whose thought Baillie tangles in this chapter. Temple maintains that all events in history are revelatory in character; Baillie agrees “there is nothing through which God cannot reveal Himself to me”.<sup>308</sup> However, while rightly maintains that any natural occurrence can and do mediate revelation, and that nature’s orderliness does mediate something of the divine Will and Wisdom; Temple wrongly asserts that ‘all occurrences are in some degree revelation’. Why is Temple’s epistemological assertion of the mark? Baillie takes aim at Temple’s description of the psychological conditions that mediate knowledge of God. ‘The intercourse and

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<sup>306</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 62.

<sup>307</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 73.

<sup>308</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 26. Cf. *ibid.*, p. 74.

interaction of mind and event’; ‘the coincidence of event and interpretation’—these rightly emphasize the epistemological necessity of human for revelation. However,

- (1) Not every human interprets all events as being revelatory.
- (2) Humans presumably cannot interpret all events as being revelatory: humans possess an imperfect “psychosomatic organization”,<sup>309</sup> are liable to faulty knowledge “about” objects or “of” subjects,<sup>310</sup> and, as such, susceptible to failure regarding the apprehension of revelation.
- (3) Nature, in and of itself, is ill equipped to mediate revelation: it is “impersonal”.
- (4) Revelation is necessarily contingent upon prior knowledge of divine Personality—as mediated by personalities.<sup>311</sup>

Baillie’s counter position is that

Revelation is always given us through events; yet not through all events, but only through such as appear to be God's mighty works; and through no event in its bare character or occurrence, but only as men are enabled by the Spirit of God to apprehend and receive its revelatory power.<sup>312</sup>

Accordingly, Baillie maintains that the events thought to instance God’s particularly “mighty works” (*δυναμεις*)—events, that is, when God’s divine action, the human intercourse and interaction of mind and event with God’s self-disclosure, and the revelation received causes wonder and astonishment<sup>313</sup>—should neither be interpreted as a disruption of the natural order, nor consequently be deemed the criterion for the

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<sup>309</sup> *OKG*, p. 222. Cf. *IRRT*, p. 26.

<sup>310</sup> *IRRT*, p. 26.

<sup>311</sup> See *ibid.*, p. 72. For Baillie’s thought on Temple’s idea of the mediation of revelation, see *ibid.*, pp. 66-82, *passim*.

<sup>312</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 78.

<sup>313</sup> Or, in the language of H.H Farmer, approvingly quoted by Baillie, when ‘the experience of God as personal reaches its maximum concentration’. Herbert Henry Farmer, *The World and God; A Study of Prayer, Providence and Miracle in Christian Experience* (London, 1935), pp. 115-118, as cited in *ibid.*, p. 77.

assessment of the status of an act: if it be a mighty act of God (i.e., revelation). Temple, however, appears to employ such a criterion, when his idea of revelation emphasizes the disruption of a uniform natural order as ontologically and epistemologically necessary for the mediation of divine action and revelation. Save that this would appear to run contrary to Temple's apparent inclination to think that revelations finds its fullest and most profound expression when mediated by the lives of persons—namely, as in “an Incarnation”<sup>314</sup>——it is nonetheless the case that Temple's thought on the mediation of revelation compromises both nature's mediation of Personality and humans' knowledge of God as Personality.<sup>315</sup> Baillie rejects such a depersonalization of Personality and of a universe in whose order Baillie finds a sacramental testimony of God's pledge to, and presence amongst, creation. Indeed, it is in our knowledge of personalities that the knowledge of Personality reaches us most assuredly and profoundly—as it must: without personal knowledge, there is no revelation, as personal knowledge is epistemologically necessary for knowledge of Personality, who acts mightily.<sup>316</sup>

In the fifth and final chapter of the work, Baillie elucidates the proper “response to revelation”. Here Baillie probes the nature of the Divine-human relationship, particularly the epistemological relationship between scripture's indirect (propositional) knowledge about God and what Baillie continues to maintain is God's direct presence to the human soul.

### **5.3. THE SENSE OF THE PRESENCE OF GOD (1962)**

The final major work under consideration is Baillie's 1960 Gifford Lecture, *The Sense of the Presence of God* (hereafter, *SPG*). A work whose content is considerably more substantive than that found in *IRRT*, *SPG* represents the mediating theologian's final thought on the issues of knowledge of God, revelation and religious experience.

The 1959 re-issue of *OKG* anticipates something of *SPG*'s trajectory. Here, Baillie expresses desire to engage “the thought and to answer the challenge of that philosophical trend which in its rapidly succeeding changes has answered in turn to the

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<sup>314</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 80.

<sup>315</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 73.

<sup>316</sup> Baillie's argument in *IRRT* against Temple's thought on the mediation of revelation is somewhat disjointed. Hence, I have had to rely somewhat on Baillie's criticism of Temple in *OKG*. It is clear, however, that in *IRRT* Baillie has difficulties with Temple's emphasis on nature's mediation of revelation.

names of logical atomism, logical positivism, and logical or linguistic analysis.”<sup>317</sup> An aspiration unrealized in the *OKG* re-issue (which, save the preface, mirrors the 1939 issue), it is effectively carried out by Baillie in *SPG*. Accordingly, my exposition of the work centers primarily upon Baillie’s criticism of the above-mentioned philosophies, with a focus on Baillie’s criticism of Bertrand Russell’s reductive naturalism and Baillie’s response to Antony Flew’s falsification challenge, in particular. These are not the only thinkers whom Baillie debates in the work. However, as the present exposition must account for major developments in Baillie’s MT, what appear to be essentially reiterations of *OKG*’s lines of criticism—for example, as Newlands suggests,<sup>318</sup> Baillie’s critique of Barth (and others)—receive only incidental consideration. Furthermore, this focus on Baillie’s new dialoguing partners will evidence if also underscore that Baillie, despite the change in intellectual context, continued, to the end, to mount the same line of attack, as a theologian whose Christian apologetic found him mediating amongst a variety of intellectual currents.

### 5.3.1. Logical Empiricism: Direct Knowledge of The Really Real Denied

Baillie’s major point of disagreement with logical empiricism is found in the final chapter of *SPG*:

My main contention throughout . . . is that we have to do, not with an absent God about whom we have a certain amount of information, but with a God whose living and active presence with us can be perceived by faith in a large variety of human contexts and situations.<sup>319</sup>

This remark discloses that the mediating theologian is concerned with at least three major issues in the work: (1) information “about” God verses faith’s perception of God; (2) God’s “absence” verses God’s “presence with us”; (3) “The large variety of human contexts and situations” in which God’s presence is “perceived”.

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<sup>317</sup> *OKG*, p. viii.

<sup>318</sup> Newlands, “The Sense of the Presence of God”, p. 155.

<sup>319</sup> *SPG*, p. 261.



### 5.3.1.1 Russell's knowledge by acquaintance: (1) information about realities verses faith's perception of Personality

Baillie's debate with Russell centers upon the object of which one has knowledge by acquaintance, as anticipated by Baillie's remark that

Thought implies a ratiocinative process which makes use of the apparatus of inference. But it must not be supposed that what is here called 'immediate knowledge' [of God] is merely sensation, the reception of the organism of sense-data. It too is a product of intelligence, though not yet of reflection. . . the work of *nous*; but of the *nous aisthetikos*, not of the *nous apodeiktikos* (or, in the Latin equivalents . . . of the *ratio intuitiva*, not of the *ratio discursiva*). When such knowledge is said to be immediate, what is meant is that it is not mediated by any process of inference. It is . . . a direct knowledge of the real, extra mental world. It is indeed mediated by sense-data, but it is not one of logical entailment [emphasis mine].<sup>320</sup>

Baillie's epistemology of mediation and immediacy provides insight into Baillie's points of agreement and disagreement with Russell's epistemology on the issue of immediate knowledge by personal acquaintance. With regard points of agreement, Baillie's distinction of "direct knowledge of the real, extra mental world" from "conceptual knowledge" parallels Russell's distinction between "knowledge by acquaintance" and "knowledge by description". Points of agreement are also found specifically within Russell's epistemic category of "knowledge by acquaintance". For one, Baillie agrees that knowledge by acquaintance is "logically prior to [knowledge by description], because our ability to make affirmations *about* anything presupposes our acquaintance with it." This point of agreement is instanced, for example, in Baillie's epistemological

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<sup>320</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 51-52. This is Baillie's interpretation of MacMurray's concept of mediated immediacy—a concept which Baillie supports on the point indicated.

perspective on human's "knowledge of reality"<sup>321</sup>—an "intimate" and "direct" knowledge ('I know X'). Secondly, Baillie agrees that second-order "knowledge of truth" presupposes "knowledge of reality" (in Russell's word, "knowledge by acquaintance"). Thirdly, Baillie agrees that "knowledge of truth" (specifically, "knowledge of propositions") can describe, as does Russell's "knowledge by description", realities known by acquaintance (i.e., 'I know that X is Y'). Baillie illuminates this point of agreement with his description of the cognition involved in such knowledge:

We bring our powers of rational analysis to bear on our experience, and to do this we have to concentrate our attention at any one time on a single strand or aspect of it [the initial experience], forming abstract mental concepts which . . . enable us to regard it in convenient temporary isolation from the rest. These concepts we then use to draw inferences from the fundamental knowledge we already have, and to extend and improve that knowledge in such a way that we now understand the temporarily abstracted aspect better than we understood it before . . . such abstract analysis cannot begin unless we already have some knowledge of the reality we are analysing.<sup>322</sup>

Baillie's epistemology, like Russell's, then, is a critical realist epistemology. For one, it maintains that indirect or inferential knowledge can provide truths that corresponding to objectively realities known by experience. Secondly, it maintains that knowledge by direct acquaintance is epistemically basic to truths about those realities. Thirdly, it maintains that knowledge about the corporeal world is the product of the mind being both an active (i.e., a "concentrating of one's attention") and "receptive" agent.<sup>323</sup> Lastly,

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<sup>321</sup> "For when we say 'reality', we mean simply being or that which is; and Aristotle's way of saying ultimate reality is *to ontos on*—essential *esse*, that which is-ly is." *Ibid.*, p. 32.

<sup>322</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 50-51. Baillie concurs with Macmurray that, as concerning scientific conclusions, '*All thought presupposes knowledge*'. John Macmurray, *Interpreting the Universe* (1933), p. 15. Macmurray's italics.

<sup>323</sup> "The knowing mind is active in attending, selecting, and interpreting; but it must attend to, select from, and interpret what is presented to it; and therefore it must be passive as well as active." *IRRT*, p.19.

Baillie’s epistemology permits empirical knowledge about the material order through reflection, analysis, and abstraction. Baillie’s epistemology rejects, however, reject the epistemic limitations placed on knowledge of realities by Russell’s knowledge by acquaintance: sense data, objects of memory, internal states, and our selves. This brings us to the issue that Baillie has with Russell’s epistemology: that “apart from ‘universals’, knowledge by acquaintance is only with sense-data and not with real objects or with real subjects.”<sup>324</sup> Rejecting Russell’s corollary position that knowledge of other selves and physical objects (as constructs, not sense data) reduces to discursive knowledge about truths—that is, to “knowledge by description”—Baillie maintains that counters that immediate knowledge by acquaintance extends to knowledge of realities, including knowledge of the Really Real. Baillie’s basic thought on the exactly nature of our knowledge of realities by acquaintance is found in his remark that

We are directly aware of reality, and of such realities as the external world, ourselves, our fellow man and God. It is this direct awareness (our knowledge of S) that is primarily, our propositional affirmations (our knowledge that S is P) being secondary and derivative and always more tentative [emphasis mine] . . .<sup>325</sup>

Thus, when Baillie contends that our direct awareness of realities extends beyond propositional knowledge about *sensibilia*, he describes direct awareness as one which should include our direct awareness of “the external world, ourselves, our fellow man and God.” Here is nothing less than appeal to MI’s four primary loci, each of which mediates immediate knowledge of realities and Reality, as support for his position that direct awareness of Reality is “capable of defense”. Elsewhere in SPG (addressed in the following sections), Baillie employs the language of mediation and immediacy to restate his position that knowledge by acquaintance is not limited to information about sensory

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<sup>324</sup>SPG, p. 16.

<sup>325</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 89.

data, but rather a “direct but mediate” knowledge of the Really Real. All of this is in keeping with the thought of Mascal, whose position Baillie approvingly cites:

While there is no perception without sensation, the sense-datum is not the terminus of perception, not the *objectum quod* . . . but the *objectum quo*, through which the intellect grasps, in a direct [i.e. immediate] but mediate [i.e., indirect] activity, the intelligible extra-mental reality which is the real thing.<sup>326</sup>

When, then, Baillie engages the first issue with which he says *SPG* is concerned—“information about realities verses faith’s perception of Personality”—he appeals to ideas of mediation and immediacy and references MI as the prescription for a better conceptualization of direct knowledge of Reality and realities. Russell’s knowledge by acquaintance correctly allows for second-order “information about” three realities; however, it falsely makes sense data the terminus, or final object, of such knowledge. Baillie rejects that epistemological premise in favor of “faith’s perception” as a direct awareness and knowledge of Personality and personalities by acquaintance.

### **5.3.1.2 Russell’s knowledge by acquaintance: (2) God’s absence verses Personality’s Presence**

Whereas Baillie’s epistemology presupposes that “there is no reality by which we are more directly confronted than we are by the Living God”,<sup>327</sup> Russell’s epistemology disallows knowledge of a God who is Personality. Baillie debates Russell on this point. For one, Russell’s limitations on knowledge by direct acquaintance make humans “half-men”. Persons unable to have knowledge of humans as personalities by direct acquaintance, such half-men must settle for direct acquaintance with (discursive knowledge about) sense data about bodies. To contend this, however, is to engage in much contradiction. For example, it contradicts human experience: “knowledge of persons is the very pattern we mean by knowledge. Of no other existents is our

<sup>326</sup> E.L Mascal, *Words and Images*, 1957, as cited in *SPG*, p. 14.

<sup>327</sup> *OKG*, p. 166.

knowledge so intimate and direct.”<sup>328</sup> It also contradicts ordinary human language about human experience—one which also presupposes persons’ acquaintance with other persons via an “intimate and direct” knowledge of other minds. Phrases like “Yes, I know him, but I do not know him very well. I hope soon to get to know him better”—these evidence that knowledge of other human minds is “more fundamental than the knowledge of propositions which may be enunciated concerning them.” In addition, it contradicts the language of religious experience, as articulated, for example, in the New Testament. Its language also indicates that knowledge by acquaintance is often believed to be direct knowledge of other personalities, including Personality. “Faith” itself comes from knowledge by acquaintance between personalities (e.g., ‘Ye have known God, or rather been known by Him’ (Gal. 4:9). Hence, while “saving faith” does entail a “latent” assent to knowledge “about” God (truths), “faith is faith in God, confidence in Him rather than the uttering of judgments concerning him.”<sup>329</sup>

By Baillie’s estimation, then, Russell’s knowledge by acquaintance further depersonalizes humans: not only does it deny humans knowledge of each other; it denies humans knowledge of God. It makes them half-men.

### **5.3.1.3 Russell’s knowledge by acquaintance: (3) the variety of human contexts and situations in which God’s presence is perceived**

When Russell’s “knowledge by acquaintance” limits direct knowledge to propositional knowledge about sense data and universals, it not only conflicts with a wide range of human experience, it also advances, as Russell would have it, a human context devoid of any certitude of God’s existence. This is because it is through the mediation of immediate knowledge of other minds—minds known by personal acquaintance—that Reality discloses Itself. In *SPG* language that sounds like it is straight from *OKG*, Baillie asserts

Where I find myself in most assured contact with reality is in the relation with God that is mediated to me through my relation with my fellows, and in the relation with my

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<sup>328</sup> *SPG*, p. 16.

<sup>329</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 17-18.

fellows that is mediated to me through my relation with God.<sup>330</sup>

Emphasizing, then, the epistemological necessity of knowledge of other minds for the mediation of knowledge of God, Baillie contends for MI's also-central claim that these personal relations are ideally characterized by *agapē*:

In Christian thought, the two great commandments, enjoining the love of God and the love of the neighbour, are related to one another in precisely this way. The way to God passes through my relation to my neighbour, and the way to my neighbour passes through my relationship to God [emphasis mine].<sup>331</sup>

This *agapē*, which, for the Christian, includes the “love of God and his Christ”,<sup>332</sup> presupposes that humans have a moral consciousness of value: when humans’ encounter the Mediator, their cognitive insight into their moral consciousness of value enables them to recognize Jesus’ being the bearer of the highest value, love.<sup>333</sup>

When Russell’s knowledge by acquaintance denies knowledge of personalities and Personalities presence, it not only contradicts humans’ experience with each other, and the Christian experience of God; it also contradicts humankind’s relationship with the world—a sense of “being at home in the universe” that derives in large from a “sense of the reality of other selves”. Moreover, Russell’s epistemology would seem to contradict the reality of Russell’s own life. For although Russell *qua* philosopher advances an epistemology whose denial of human knowledge of humans and God by acquaintance

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<sup>330</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 39.

<sup>331</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 37. Baillie instance I John 4: 20 and Matt. 25: 40, 45 for support. The command to “love one’s neighbour as thyself” is a divine command to treat persons as “subjects”, not “objects”. To objectify persons is to fail to act on “claims” made by God as mediated by one’s neighbors. *Ibid.*, pp. 36-37.

<sup>332</sup> “[I]t is only in our togetherness with our neighbour that the love of God and his Christ effectively reaches us, so conversely . . . our own love for God and his Christ can find effective expression only in our love for our neighbour.” *Ibid.*, p. 139.

<sup>333</sup> In his analysis of *OKG*, Fergusson observes: “By identifying an implicit knowledge of the moral demands that are imposed upon each person Baillie seems to be reiterating his earlier theological epistemology.” “Orthodox Liberal”, p. 143.

ontologically reduces humans to “half-men”; as a personality who philosophizes, Russell lives the life of a whole man, as evidences in the quality of his relations with his acquaintances. A comportment that presupposes these acquaintances to be personalities, Russell’s quality of living suggests to Baillie that, at least in the bottom of his heart, Russell believes in the objective existence of personality, Personality and moral absolutes.<sup>334</sup> From an epistemological perspective, however, Russell’s knowledge by acquaintance situates the human in a universe wholly impersonal, as it denies the variety of human contexts and situations in which God’s presence is perceived.

#### **5.3.1.4 Flew’s falsification challenge**

Baillie's argument against Flew's falsification challenge rests squarely upon Baillie's epistemology of the universal immediacy of knowledge of God. As support for immediate knowledge of God, Baillie draws from his thought on three issues: the meaningfulness of the language sense of the presence of God, the conditions of falsification of belief in God, and the theological-experiential basis for belief in God.

##### **5.3.1.4.1 A "sense" of God’s Presence: meaningful language**

Baillie's argument for the meaningful language of knowledge of God focuses on the language of "sense". He argues that humans have a sense of God's presence, and that the language of sense is not meaningless because it corresponds to ordinary language usage pertaining to sense: namely, our so-called “senses” of proportion, literary style, duty, and the holy. When mention of these sense are made, it is generally understood, and granted, that the sense-language epistemologically corresponds to realities that objectively exist—i.e., that these senses are "modes of apprehension" wherewith one can apprehend objects that exist apart from the knower and can state truths about them. This realism, notes Baillie, presupposes that each knowledge type is a mediated knowledge: each “presuppose for their possibility the experience gained through the bodily senses”. It is also presupposed that this sense-knowledge is an immediate awareness of the object—that each sense can “enable us to perceive something not otherwise perceptible; to *perceive* it ... not merely to conceive it.” Specifically, what is granted as knowledge is

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<sup>334</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 30-31.

“an aspect of reality” which, although mediated by truths about the object of apprehension, does yet extend “beyond the bodily senses” and any one “truth or proposition” about the object.<sup>335</sup> “Faith” likewise presupposes that its knowledge is mediated by sensory data about objects situated in the corporeal world. It is analogous to the other senses also in that it presupposes immediate knowledge of an aspect of reality: it is “a mode of apprehension which perceives something more [God] than the total reality with which we are confronted than is manifest, or is expected to be manifest, to the senses”.<sup>336</sup> Faith's analogous correspondence with the epistemology presupposed by other senses warrants the admittance of the language “sense of the presence of God” as meaningful. Faith, a knowledge of God by direct acquaintance is, suggests Baillie, available to all of humankind: for salvation means “wholeness, health, [and] well-being . . . of the whole man, body, soul, and spirit”,<sup>337</sup> and Jesus’ mediation of “saving grace” extends not only to those in the present, but also to those “men of the Old Testament” who “could yet call upon his name”.<sup>338</sup> This faith admits of varying degrees; however, God apparently has left no soul untouched—that is, unable to “sense” the presence of God.

#### 5.3.1.4.2 A “sense” of God’s Presence: falsifiable

Flew's falsification challenge demands the acknowledgment of circumstances under which one would be willing to reject belief in God's existence. Under what concrete circumstances would one willing surrender belief in God?

Faith would be lost only if this primary apprehension should itself utterly fail, if we were no longer able to discover any such meaning in any events but came to regard the whole of our experience and everything that has ever happened as a meaningless jumble.<sup>339</sup>

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<sup>335</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 50-59, *passim*.

<sup>336</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 126.

<sup>337</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 197.

<sup>338</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 93.

<sup>339</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 73.



Baillie's response to Flew's challenge on this point reflects his position on how theological language is verified.

The formal pattern of the verificatory procedure is thus the same in theology as in physical science, the difference being that in the latter case the appeal is to what is 'revealed' to ordinary sense perception, but in the former to what is revealed to the 'eye' of faith.<sup>340</sup>

#### **5.3.1.4.3 A "sense" of God's Presence: a Christological basis**

Baillie's rejection of empirical reductionism throughout *SPG* is ultimately incarnational. This applies to Flew's challenge, to Russell's epistemology, as well as to the idealists Plato and Bradley, who also deny direct knowledge of God is mediated by tactile-sensory knowledge about the corporeal world. Baillie's response is a concession accompanied by a faith statement:

I cannot claim that such doubts [God's existence; existence of other minds] are entirely foreign to my own mind, but if I am asked how I am able to overcome them, I shall have to confess that for me their ultimate refutation is theological and incarnational.<sup>341</sup>

It befits Baillie's life and thought, that he should end his career by putting Jesus Christ at the center of his thought.

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<sup>340</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 68.

<sup>341</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 85.

#### 5.4. CONCLUSION

I have noted that previous research has documented an increased Christocentrism and stronger idea of revelation in Baillie's thought from *OKG* onward. Our examination of Baillie's latter MT bears this out. My conclusion for this chapter is that we also see a stronger doctrine of the Holy Spirit in Baillie's latter MT.

We need but consider Baillie's response to Flew. Although Baillie does not appeal explicitly to the Holy Spirit, when he responds to Flew, when Baillie appeals to a theology of revelation—particularly to the mode of apprehension (faith) that appropriates divine action as revelatory (i.e., immediate knowledge of God)—his epistemology relies substantially on an implicit epistemology of the Holy Spirit. For how does faith arrive at revelation—immediate knowledge of God? Baillie's idea of revelation, as Ward observes, emphasizes the unity of the Divine and the human through "the work of the Holy Spirit within the believer."<sup>342</sup> Accordingly, the Holy Spirit's work in the believer is that which underwrites Baillie's response to Flew's challenge in *SPG*. Indeed, while human relations with "individual personalities" are important for the mediation of revelation, they are not "entirely analogous" to the God-human relationship—a relationship with "Personality Itself". This is to say that "there is a point beyond which our relation to one another ceases to be analogous to our relation to God":

The indwelling of the Holy Spirit of God in the heart of man is a togetherness of a more complex and intimate kind than any relation that can exist between one finite spirit and another. The relation between two individual personalities cannot be entirely analogous [to that between one individual personality and Another who is not only individual personality but Personality Itself . . . not only good but Goodness . . . not only loving but Love].<sup>343</sup>

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<sup>342</sup> Keith Ward, *Religion and Revelation*, p. 228.

<sup>343</sup> *OKG*, pp. 238-239.

Accordingly, Baillie's epistemology of revelation presupposes that knowledge from the Holy-Spirit human relationship is qualitatively more complex and intimate than that from human-human relationships.

How does this relate to Flew's falsification challenge? To deny immediate knowledge of God, as the condition for the satisfaction of Flew's falsification challenge, would require a denial of the Holy Spirit. For it is clearly that it is the Holy Spirit who enables faith to be the "primary mode of apprehension"; that it is the Holy Spirit who is involved at all stages of assent to trust in God: for it is the Holy Spirit who develops humans' latent, immediate awareness of God (a "sense" of God's presence); that it is the Holy Spirit who prompts the will's assent to belief in God; that it is the Holy Spirit who provides the immediate confirmation—a "psychological certitude" by direct acquaintance (as opposed to logical certainty established by a highest inference)—of God's being incarnate in Jesus Christ; that it is the Holy Spirit who, as the above passage makes plain, enables personalities a qualitatively more intimate relationship with, through immediate knowledge by acquaintance of, Personality than can ever be shared between two or more human minds. Such an enablement is supposed not only by Baillie's epistemological claim for the legitimacy of a sense of God's presence as a primary mode of apprehension; it is supposed also by Baillie's confession that the refutation of empirical reductionism is, for him, ultimately Incarnational.

Moreover, we have seen that MI's own description of revelation assumes that the Holy Spirit is the One who provides the epistemological connection between our knowledge about second-order truths about God's divine action, and our immediate knowledge of God. Although Baillie does not elaborate on this epistemological connection in *OKG*, he does elaborate on the Holy Spirit's action in *SPG*. There, he indicates that the Holy Spirit mediates CRE, by illuminating the mind with at least three types of immediacy. Specifically, the Holy Spirit's relation with the human in soul is such that: (1) the Holy Spirit enables an immediate perception (cf. a "sense" of God's presence; faith as a "mode of apprehension") of God's having been directly present in Jesus Christ—this despite God's self disclosure's mediation by an indirect, veiled form (flesh); (2) the Holy Spirit enables an immediate trust in God, as Self-disclosed in Jesus Christ: "faith" whose evidence is ultimately irreducible to sensory perception (that which

is seen); and (3) the Holy Spirit enables an immediate confirmation—a “psychological certitude” by (direct acquaintance), of knowledge of God and of Jesus’ being the proper Subject of Christian faith (*contra* confirmation by indirect knowledge—namely, knowledge about God from a “highest inference”). Each type of immediacy cannot be established by propositional knowledge—in Baillie’s words, established by a “well-turned syllogism”, “no matter how swiftly intuited”. Rather, the Holy Spirit’s agency enables each type of immediacy.

When, then, Baillie maintains that the obliteration of a sense of God’s presence would satisfy Flew’s conditions for the falsification of belief in God’s existence, while he is surely advancing an epistemologically-oriented, empirico-sensory mediated, ordinary language-reconcilable overt appeal to the possible denial of the “the primary mode of apprehension”; he is also advancing, inasmuch as his epistemology of divine revelation is coherent, a revelation-oriented, faith-grounded, theologically-reconcilable implicit appeal to the possible denial of the Holy Spirit, the primary means of apprehension.

In passing, it strikes me as somewhat criminal that I should expound Baillie’s epistemology of the Holy Spirit within the context of his debate with Flew; the Holy Spirit’s importance for Baillie’s thought far exceeds that particular debate. However, I hope that this research observation suffices to make the point effectively.

**DIVISION III: MOVING FORWARD WITH MI: RESEARCH ISSUES  
RESOLVED**

**6. THE MEANING OF MI: CONFLICTING INTERPRETATIONS RESOLVED**

In this the final division of the thesis, I tackle and resolve the three primary research issues facing Baillie research today: (1) MI's meaning, (2) MI's importance for Baillie's MT, and (3) MI's promise for contemporary Christian thought.

The present chapter is concerned with MI's meaning. Does MI separate faith from knowledge, or does it contend for an organic epistemological connection between faith and knowledge? Does MI evidence Baillie's being logically agnostic? Does its idea of immediacy fail to express a "theologically understanding" of Christian knowledge of God, or does it convey the very "logic of faith" itself? Is MI a metaphysical structure or argument? Does it de-personalize Christian faith in Jesus Christ? Does MI's logic reduce to an historical or sacramental model? Does MI describe the mediation of knowledge of God as being a dyadic or a triadic relationship? We are now in a position to make research contributions on these minor, meaning-related research issues, as preparation for the resolution of one of the major research issues at present, MI's value for contemporary Christian thought. In this chapter, I will draw extensively from the groundwork provided by the elucidation of MI's four functions (Chapter 2) and the diachronic trace's insight into MI's meaning (Chapters 3-5).

**6.1. NEITHER A THEISTIC NOR A METAPHYSICAL PROOF**

We begin with Stearns's criticism of MI. Stearns's criticism suggests that he interprets MI as an argument for a metaphysic. The evidence for that interpretation comes from the metaphysical language used by Stearns to criticize Baillie's model of MI: it fails, he says, to elucidate "how the infinite can be known in the finite". One so-called

“advantage” of Stearns’s model of mediated immediacy is its being, unlike Baillie’s, “tied to no particular metaphysics.”<sup>344</sup>

In Chapter 2 we found that MI's logic presupposes the objective existence of an Infinite (God), finite realities (human minds, the self, and the corporeal world), and an organic relationship (ontologically and epistemologically) between these realities: humans and the corporeal world instance something of the mind of God; and knowledge of God is always mediated by realities created by God. We have also found MI’s logic to suppose that “the infinite invades the finite world”. In this respect, MI constitutes an attempt by the mediating theologian Baillie to correlate a theology of the Infinite (i.e., revelation) with the religious experience of the finite. That each of MI’s four major functions describes how God relates to the human soul; that Baillie himself does not refrain from metaphysical language—God is the “Really Real” and “the ground of being and knowing”—also makes understandable how MI could be interpreted as a metaphysical concept.

However, I must firmly reject Stearns’s interpretation of MI as a metaphysical construct. For one, MI’s logic presupposes an immediate universal knowledge of God that is not established by metaphysical speculation. Secondly, were Baillie to ground religion in metaphysical speculation or, as Stearns's criticism suggests, to advance a theory of religion whose end is an all-encompassing explanation of reality, Baillie would certainly contend as much and maintain that MI is part of Baillie's plan to realize such ends; for as Stearns himself recognizes, MI’s epistemology is most central to the idea of revelation to Baillie’s description of how God divinely acts "in, with and under" the universe. What, however, does one find, when considering Baillie's idea of revelation, in general? To be sure, Baillie's is the persistent and forthright claim that humans' universal knowledge of God; and Baillie, accordingly, ties MI’s epistemology to such a universal and immediate knowledge. Nonetheless, Baillie does maintain that theological language (or any other language) can demonstrate the veridicality of the core metaphysical realities supposed to exist objectively and to mediate knowledge of God. This includes Baillie’s refusal to demonstrate the existences of those media “in, with and” which the so-called

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<sup>344</sup> J. Brenton Stearns, "Mediated Immediacy: A Search for Some Models", *International Journal for the Philosophy of Religion*, 3, winter, 1972, (pp. 195-211), pp. 201-207 *passim*.

Really Real, God, manifest Itself: the realities that are the self, other human minds, and the corporeal world. Rather, the apologist uses the language of MI to evoke knowledge of, and to deepen faith's response to, the Reality and realities already known immediately, as mediated by human experience—all of this with the aim to drive persons to faith in, or to a deeper faith in Jesus Christ, the Mediator in whom the Really Real supremely dwells. Furthermore, were MI a construct whose logic represented an attempt to provide a demonstration of “how the infinite can be known in the finite”,<sup>345</sup> one would expect MI's functions to lay primary emphasis on universal knowledge of God. While it does lend itself to a description of universal revelation, and certainly presupposes universal revelation, each of its four functions focuses primarily on the mediation of a specifically Christian knowledge of God. This too counts against Stearns's faulty interpretation.

## **6.2. DOES NOT DIVORCE CHRISTIAN FAITH FROM PROPOSITIONAL KNOWLEDGE ABOUT GOD**

D.W. Torrance maintains that “immediated immediacy” (sic) evidences a “liberal” “separation of faith and knowledge” and that Baillie never “theologically . . . really understood the real significance of faith as knowledge, or personal encounter with God in Jesus Christ”.<sup>346</sup> Torrance's position is consistent with D.C. Macintosh's claim that MI's idea of immediacy evidences that Baillie is “logically agnostic” “at the bottom of his mind”.

I begin by noting that these thinkers have failed to indicate what is necessary for qualifying my evaluation of their criticism—namely, details. For instance, Macintosh does not define what he means by logical agnosticism. If his claim amounts to the assertion that Baillie rejects the possibility of a logical demonstration of God, then the empirical theologian has correctly stated the obvious. Perhaps, however, Macintosh is contending that Baillie's idea of immediacy evidences that there is no rational basis for either belief or disbelief in God? Perhaps this also what D.W. Torrance has in mind? For it unclear what Torrance has in mind when it comes to faith, knowledge and the assertion

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<sup>345</sup> *OKG*, p. 240.

<sup>346</sup> David W. Torrance, a review of Fergusson's *Christ Church and Society*, in “The Evangelical Quarterly”, Vol. 68, No. 1, January 1996, p. 87.

that MI's supposedly separates the two: he offers no qualification—just the assertion that “immediated immediacy”, which I have presumed to be MI, evidences such a separation. We do know that claims to immediate knowledge of God typically court criticism to the effect that immediate knowledge results in a propositionally contentless faith, as it precludes possible knowledge of an objectively existing God.<sup>347</sup> Henry, as we have found, criticizes Baillie's idea of revelation along similar lines, maintaining that Baillie's idea of immediacy denies “epistemic access” to God. As such, his criticism is in keeping with the thrust of Macintosh's criticism of MI's analogy of other minds (see Chapter 1).

The claim, then, is that MI endorses logical agnosticism. The general ground or supporting evidence appears to be researchers' shared position that Baillie's idea of immediacy separates discursive (mediated) knowledge about God (truths) from a direct apprehension of God (immediate knowledge of Reality), thereby rendering knowledge of God illogical. Does MI's epistemology provide no rational basis for belief or disbelief in God?

MI's function as a description of the cognition involved in CRE does juxtapose the mode (logical abstraction) and the content (“truth”) of mediated knowledge (propositional knowledge) with the mode (faith-as-a primary mode of apprehension) and the content (“realities”) of non-abstracted knowledge (immediate knowledge). This alone could suggest a separation of Christian faith's apprehension of God from discursive knowledge about God, if immediate knowledge of God is interpreted as an assent to a God about whom one does not have propositional knowledge. However, MI's logic does not epistemologically separate discursive knowledge from faith's immediate knowledge of God. This is apparent when we consider Baillie's thought on the primary target of MI's critics, its idea of immediacy. Here, one can quote Baillie at random.

From *IRRT*:

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<sup>347</sup> See, e.g., Steven T. Katz, "Language, Epistemology and Philosophical Analysis", in *Mysticism and Philosophical Analysis*, ed. Steven T. Katz, pp. 22-74. London: Sheldon Press, 1978.



Our contention has been that Christian faith (*fides salvifica*) consists essentially in reliance (*fiducia*) upon the revelation of God in Christ, that this reliance [*fiducia*] necessarily presupposes an acquaintance (*notitia*) with its object and also latently contains an assent (*assensus*) to certain affirmations that can be made about that object, but that there are many variations in the degree to which this latent assent becomes patent in men's minds and these affirmations are explicitly drawn out [emphasis mine].<sup>348</sup>

Christian saving faith, then, requires immediate knowledge, by direct acquaintance with God, of God being in Christ (i.e., an immediate knowledge). However, assent to Christian faith is also mediated by propositional knowledge in at least two senses: (1) *notitia* of an object (God); (2) a "latent" assent to "certain affirmations that *can be made about that object*"(God). Hence, Baillie's position is that propositional knowledge about God (truths) can epistemologically correspond to immediate knowledge of God (Reality). Accordingly, inasmuch as language about God is logically consistent with CRE, it can correspond epistemologically to God-as-immediately known, although it can never totalize God's being.

From *SPG*:

The Westminster Shorter Catechism is . . . using directly applicable and non-symbolic language [emphasis mine] when it answers the question 'What is God?' by saying 'God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal and unchangeable, in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth.'<sup>349</sup>

Even when Baillie argues, problematically,<sup>350</sup> for an awareness of God about which one is consciously unaware—namely, that *fides salvifica* is possible at the subconscious level,

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<sup>348</sup> *IRRT*, p. 100.

<sup>349</sup> *SPG*, p. 119.

<sup>350</sup> E.g., H.D. Lewis, *Philosophy of Religion* (London: English University Press, 1965), pp. 113-122; John Macquarrie, *In Search of Deity* (London: SCM, 1984), p. 44.

even when God's existence is denied "with the top of one's head"—he still stipulates that subconscious or "pre-reflective" knowledge "in the bottom of the heart" must be mediated by propositional knowledge whose logic corresponds to God.

There is no reason why we should not extend the distinction between *fides directa* and *fides reflexa* to the element *assensus* as well as to that of *fiducia*, and to speak of an unconscious assent.<sup>351</sup>

When even, then, Baillie's idea of immediacy engages what it takes to be pre-reflective knowledge of God, it hardly "fails to emphasize . . . the gift of our mental equipment that divine revelation addresses", as Henry maintains.

Baillie's emphasis on the logical epistemological connection between faith and propositional is, furthermore, apparent in Baillie's anthropology. When, for example, Baillie debates Barth, Baillie emphasizes that human nature is but "a good thing spoiled": neither its form nor its content have been entirely obliterated by the human situation. This is to say that, according to Baillie, even the "mental equipment" of unregenerate minds can and does have "epistemic access" to God's mind.

Accordingly, MI's epistemology presupposes that Christian faith is mediated by propositional knowledge about "objective reality" of God: without this germinal knowledge (*notitia*), there can be no perfectly saving faith in Jesus Christ, as there can be no recognition of God's being in Jesus Christ. Furthermore, MI's epistemology does insist that faith in Jesus Christ must be mediated by, to use Henry's phrase, "a Truth to be acknowledged and a Word to be heard". Baillie calls it the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

The Christian knowledge of God is not given to any man save in conjunction with the telling of an 'old, old, story' ...  
 . . . . 'For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Jesus Christ; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time . . .'<sup>352</sup>

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<sup>351</sup> *OKG*, p. 72.

<sup>352</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 180.

. . . . And to this day all the history that has Presence in it for me, all the history that has anything to say to me, all of the past through which I am addressed in the present, is centered in the story of the Cross.<sup>353</sup>

The Holy Spirit, contends Baillie, enables the apprehension of, and commitment to (i.e., faith), God: for the Holy Spirit provides the epistemological linkage between immediate of Reality and mediated knowledge about truths. How does the Holy Spirit do so? Does the Holy Spirit, for instance, compel one to “separate” faith from reason, on Baillie’s reading? To the contrary: when probing the enigmatic depths of God’s relations to the soul, Baillie emerges with the emphasis that Christian faith must be mediated by propositional knowledge about God: for it is *when the Holy Spirit is thinking within our own thoughts*, that our minds are illuminated.

When God speaks to us in the Epistle, it is at the same time St. Paul who speaks to us. St. Paul’s thinking is not extinguished, but is rather at its best, when God is most plainly thinking in him [emphasis mine].<sup>354</sup>

When, then, the Holy Spirit “thinks” within persons, the epistemic content is not a-rational (contra-rational); rather, it has a rational basis. To be sure, the content is supra-rational,<sup>355</sup> as it apparently must be: although the Holy Spirit thinks in human thoughts to enable the epistemological connection between knowledge of invisible realities (God, human minds) and knowledge about these realities as manifest in the corporeal world (i.e., the sacramental universe; the human body), those thoughts do convey knowledge of and about minds whose ontology or essence transcends bodies (such as God, if Henry will allow). Nonetheless, Baillie does not maintain that the Holy Spirit violates reason.

MI’s idea of immediacy also presupposes, as we have found, that the Holy Spirit provides an immediate “psychological certitude” of the objective existence of Reality

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<sup>353</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 186.

<sup>354</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 236.

<sup>355</sup> Baillie does not use this language. As Baillie is fond of saying, discursive reasoning in its entirety “cannot get its arms around faith”.

(and realities) to Whom truths can and do epistemologically correspond—a confirmation due to the Holy Spirit’s thinking the Holy Spirit’s thoughts in one’s own thoughts.

Moreover, the Holy Spirit-provides an epistemological correspondence between knowledge of God (and human minds) by faith, and knowledge about God (and humans) via abstraction, enables Christian’s to have a “frame of reference”—a practical knowledge concerning “a way of living, which includes a way of thinking, a way of feeling and a way of behaving”.<sup>356</sup> A reiteration of Baillie's insistence upon an epistemological connection between faith and propositional knowledge, it too counts against the claim that MI's idea of immediacy “separates faith from knowledge”. So too does Baillie’s position that contemplating the physical order can facilitate one’s sense of the unseen presence of God. Baillie’s idea of immediacy does not conceive of propositional knowledge and faith’s immediate knowledge of God as being epistemologically separated; Baillie’s idea of immediacy contends that they are logically connected complementary modes for understanding God, the corporeal world, the self, and other humans. MI’s four functions endeavor to capture that very ontological and epistemological dynamic.

Baillie insists: “Faith and reason must not...be enemies but the best of friends”.<sup>357</sup> This is to say that faith and reason's epistemological limitations should be acknowledged, though never separated.<sup>358</sup> MI’s idea of immediacy presupposes that faith and reason are epistemologically connected: Christian faith is a logic which presupposes that God objectively exists apart from God’s creation, “in, with and under which” God is immediately known (i.e., epistemic access to reality); this, in turn, presupposes an epistemological correspondence between faith’s immediate apprehension of God and second-order truths about God; this, in turn, presupposes that propositional knowledge about certain truths (e.g., Jesus Christ) mediate immediate knowledge of Reality (God) and other “realities”; this, in turn, presupposes that knowledge about God can regulate the progressive development of Christian faith-as-lived—that an immediate sense of God’s presence (faith, in general), including an immediate sense of God’s being in Christ

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<sup>356</sup> *SPG*, 137. See *ibid.*, pp. 130-148.

<sup>357</sup> *Invitation to Pilgrimage*, p. 42.

<sup>358</sup> “It is, however, a mistake to set faith, as Kant did, in contrast to knowledge . . . The Biblical contrast is rather between faith and *sight* . . . In the New Testament to know God and to have faith in him are often hardly more than two ways of saying the same thing.” *SPG*, pp. 4-5.

(Christian faith), always entails: an Object (Reality) of faith known immediately (as Subject); reflection upon propositions (truths) which may or may not epistemologically correspond to latent *a priori* “conceptions” about God; and an intellectual assent to putative truth statements about God.

Thus, MI’s logic does emphasize that Christian faith has a rational basis—a cognitive-propositional basis—while refusing to reduce knowledge of God to an inference based on any sum of propositions. Indeed, its often suspect element of immediacy presupposes propositional knowledge as epistemologically necessary for knowledge of God: as direct knowledge of God in Jesus Christ must be mediated by the thinking of God’s thoughts about Jesus Christ and an assent to Gospel truths. Important in this respect, is Baillie’s thought on the Holy Spirit: The Holy Spirit enables humans to think God’s thought’s—this by thinking God’s thoughts in the thoughts of humans. MI’s core position on the mediation of Christian knowledge of God—it is always mediated by knowledge of God, others, the corporeal world, oneself, and Jesus Christ—underscores that Christian faith is epistemologically tied to, as it is necessarily mediated by, knowledge about God. MI’s logic presupposes that the Holy Spirit is the One who makes that connection possible. Consequently, should one insist upon Baillie’s separation of faith and reason, support for that claim would have to be established by demonstrating that Baillie’s idea of immediacy presupposes a faulty conceptualization of the Holy Spirit’s action in and to the human mind. Neither D.W. Torrance, nor Henry, nor Macintosh have to say on this matter; nor do they, for that matter, have any illumination to offer on Baillie’s idea of immediacy at all. And on the issue of Baillie’s supposed separation of faith and knowledge, we would be wrong to place faith in the legitimacy of their dogmatic assertion, as such faith would demand our own separation from knowledge of Baillie’s thought, properly understood.

### **6.3. DOES NOT ADVOCATE LOGICAL AGNOSTICISM**

If, then, we are right to presume that “logical agnosticism” means that there is no rational basis for either belief or disbelief that God exists; and rightly presume that Baillie believes, to use Macintosh’s phrase, “in the bottom of his mind” the logic of immediacy

for MI's epistemology contends; then, in light of the above criticism, we can rightly conclude, as I do, that MI does not advocate logical agnosticism.

#### 6.4. EMPHASIZES PERSONAL ENCOUNTER WITH GOD IN CHRIST

D.W. Torrance also claims that MI evidences a failure on Baillie's part to understand theologically "the real significance of . . . personal encounter with God in Jesus Christ." This is a serious charge, if perhaps one tempered somewhat by Torrance's failure to explain the meaning of "real significance". Presumably, the thought is that MI evidences Baillie's failure as a theologian to emphasize that knowledge of God is a personal encounter with God in Jesus Christ.

Does MI not underscore the epistemological necessity of personal encounter with Jesus Christ for Christian knowledge of God? Baillie's makes plain that it does.

The kind of directness for which we have contended in our knowledge of God is thus not at all interfered with, but is rather implemented, by the fact of Christ's mediatorship. This is what I have tried to express in the conception of a mediated immediacy. In Christ we know God not by argument but by personal acquaintance. In Christ God comes to us directly [emphasis mine].<sup>359</sup>

How is personal acquaintance with Christ mediated by humans' direct encounter with God? It is always mediated by personal acquaintance with humans:

The service of others, the fellowship with others, and the historical tradition in which I stand are all media that lead me to the Mediator, and the Mediator leads me to God . . . . Clearly, then, the immediacy of God's presence to our souls is a mediated immediacy.<sup>360</sup>

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<sup>359</sup> *OKG*, pp. 196-197.

<sup>360</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 181.

MI's formal structure, then, demands personal acquaintance with Jesus Christ for Christian knowledge of God. How does MI describe the quality of these personal relations? What, for instance, does mediated contend with regard to the nature of the fellowship between persons that is said to be epistemologically necessary for Christian knowledge of God? Personal acquaintance with Christ, as has been emphasized in previous chapters, must be mediated by *agapē* in the *koinonia* of human relations: to fellowship with humans in such a context is to fellowship with God in *agapē*.<sup>361</sup>

Perhaps the author of works such as *And The Life Everlasting, A Diary of Private Prayer*, and *Christian Devotion*, did not really "theologically understand" the significance of what it means to have a personal encounter with God in Jesus Christ. Nevertheless, MI does not de-emphasize a personal encounter with Jesus Christ, as D.W. Torrance maintains. This will become increasingly apparent in the following section. There, we will find MI rather emphasizing the deeply personal and intimate quality of Christian knowledge of God—this, in keeping with Newlands's observation that Baillie's critical thought is characteristically personal.<sup>362</sup>

## 6.5. DESCRIBES A TRIADIC MEDIATION OF KNOWLEDGE OF GOD

Does MI's logic conceive of the mediation of immediate knowledge of God as being a dyadic or triadic process of mediation?

Stearns, as we have found, argues that (1) Baillie's model of MI is an inadequate model of knowledge of God, because it (2) fails to demonstrate "how the infinite can be known in the finite." His support for (2): (2a) MI's logic is tied to a particular metaphysical system; (2b) MI's logic does not conceive of knowledge of God as being mediated by a triadic relationship; (2c) MI's logic reduces to that of a Lutheran sacramental model; (2d) MI's analogy of other minds (knowledge of God and knowledge of human minds is a mediated immediacy) is problematic, on grounds: (2d1) "there may yet be inferences that are very fast, habitual, or tacit" in our knowledge of human minds; (2d2) "as Tennant tells us, we cannot move from psychological immediacy to epistemological ground for our beliefs without argument"; (2d3) it lacks "the

<sup>361</sup> 'He that loveth not knoweth not God' [I John 4:8], whereas 'If we love one another, God dwelleth in us' [I John 4:12]. As cited in *ibid.*, p. 179.

<sup>362</sup> Newlands, "The Sense of the Presence of God", *passim*.

epistemological credentials that make a belief rational . . .” (as evidenced in Plantinga's concession that “he has no answer to the epistemological problem as to how we know them

I have already argued against ground (2a), maintaining that MI is not arguing for a metaphysical system. Here, I shall focus on claim (2b): that Baillie’s “other minds model” of MI does not conceive of the mediation of knowledge of God as a triadic process. Stearns maintains that a model of mediated immediacy should conceive of knowledge of God as being mediated by a threefold or triadic relationship.

The relation between the believer and God is to be constructed, like the relation between the reader and what he reads, as triadic. Imagine the worshiper, God, and religiously significant finite events as represented by three points on a triangle. The route from the worshiper to God is then both immediate (taking the short route along one side of a triangle) and mediated by the religiously significant finite events (taking the long route via the third point of the triangle. Mediated immediacy presents a problem only to the person who thinks all relations are dyadic.<sup>363</sup>

The mediation of knowledge of God to humans, then, should be described as triadic in this sense: its three loci are God, significant events, and the worshiper. These loci should not be conceived as a collinear mediation of God, as this (dyadic) scheme would compromise the immediacy of knowledge of God. Indeed, this is Josiah Royce’s “key insight”, as well as part of Stearns’s warrant for rejecting Baillie’s “other minds model” in favor of Royce’s “other minds model” of mediated immediacy.

Stearns’s implicit claim, then, is that Baillie’s model of MI rejects a triadic description of the mediation of knowledge of God is plainly incorrect. Consider, however, Baillie’s remarks in *OKG*.

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<sup>363</sup> “Mediated Immediacy: A Search for Some Models”, p. 204.



The service of others, the fellowship with others, and the historical tradition in which I stand are all media that lead me to the Mediator, and the Mediator leads me to God . . . . Clearly, then, the immediacy of God's presence to our souls is a mediated immediacy.<sup>364</sup>

Baillie, then, identifies three loci which mediate knowledge of God's immediate presence in and to our souls: God, history, and one's fellows. Elaborating on these same media, Baillie suggests that the relationship is not unidirectional, but that knowledge of any one locus informs knowledge of the other.

All this mediation is part of God's gracious purpose in refusing to unite me to Himself without at the same time uniting me to my fellow men-in making it impossible for me to obey either of the two great commandments without at the same time obeying the other.<sup>365</sup>

We have found Baillie emphasizing the epistemological necessity of a *koinonia* of *agapē* for the mediation of knowledge of God. In *SPG*, he does the same: "The Christian Way . . . is the way followed within the *koinonia* of *agapē*, and is a form of togetherness specific to Christianity in spite of all foreshadowing of it that may elsewhere be found."<sup>366</sup> How does the *koinonia* of *agapē* mediate knowledge of God and knowledge of others? Baillie indicates in *SPG* that it does so triadically:

The togetherness is essentially that of a triangular relationship, the three angles of which [are] oneself, one's fellow Christians, and God as known in Christ; and the relationship is such that from any one angle a second angle can be effectively reached only by way of the third. We can reach God only through our neighbour. We cannot love

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<sup>364</sup> *OKG*, pp. 180-181.

<sup>365</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>366</sup> *SPG*, p. 138.

him except in loving our neighbour. Nor does God reach us or manifest his love to us save through our neighbour—that is, save in our togetherness with him. Christianity is in its very essence a matter of fellowship.

. . . . But if it is only in our togetherness with our neighbour that the love of God and his Christ effectively reaches us, so conversely it is true that our own love for God and his Christ can find effective expression only in our love for our neighbour.

. . . . [T]he current of *agapē* within the Christian *koinonia* flows also around the triangle in the contrary direction. The horizontal path along the base is not viable unless we are at the same time following the longer route via the apex. If we can find God, and God can find us, only in the finding of our brother, so also is it true that we can find our brother only through God's finding of us and our finding of him [emphasis mine].<sup>367</sup>

As these remarks come from *SPG*, they represent Baillie's final position on the mediation of knowledge of God.

There is, however, another corner to Stearns's triangle: "significant events". Does MI maintain that knowledge of god is mediated by significant events? It does so most thoroughly. For one, two of its functions—as a description of divine action and a description of revelation—describe knowledge of God (revelation) as always being an event and no ordinary one at that: revelation is always one of God's "mighty acts of God".<sup>368</sup> Secondly, one might also safely presume that when MI makes knowledge of other persons an event, it conceives of that event as being "significant": it is requisite for knowledge of God. Then there is Baillie's claim: "*It is only in the conception of history as something that happens in the present that the apparent contradiction in our doctrine of mediated immediacy can be reasonably resolved.*"<sup>369</sup> Thirdly, all of MI's logic points to the historical event. Fourthly, MI's logic maintains that Pentecost is the paradigmatic event today for an understanding of CRE: for we shall find (next chapter), that when Baillie speaks of Christianity as a "frame of reference" in *SPG*, and contends that the Holy Spirit's Presence at the Pentecost is the Paradigmatic Experience for all other

<sup>367</sup> *SPG*, pp. 138-140.

<sup>368</sup> See *IRRT*, Chapter Four: "The Mighty Acts of God," pp. 62-82.

<sup>369</sup> *OKG*, p. 189.

paradigmatic experiences (e.g., revelatory moments; moments of faith in Jesus), the core epistemological basis for his “frame of reference” is MI.

We might develop additional support for MI’s position that this corner of the triangle mediates knowledge of God—for instance, that MI presupposes that Jesus’ is the logical center of history, and that knowledge about the historical event of Jesus Christ’s is epistemologically necessary for Christian knowledge of God; or, for that matter, that the concept, in its most basic expression, describes each corner of the triangle as being epistemologically necessary for knowledge of God: knowledge of God is always mediated by knowledge of concrete “events” (the corporeal world), and knowledge of others (one’s mind, and other minds). However, this does not seem necessary as additional support for my position that MI’s epistemology, contra Stearns’s interpretation, describes the mediation of knowledge of God as triadic. Thus, I agree with Power, who appears also to interpret MI’s logic along triadic lines.

#### **6.6. REDUCES NEITHER TO SUGGESTED SACRAMENTAL NOR HISTORICAL MODELS OF REVELATION**

Stearns argues that (2c) MI’s logic should be interpreted as reducing to a Lutheran, sacramental model; and that when thus understood, that logic compromises the coherence of MI. Conversely, Klinefelter interprets MI’s logic as reducing to a historical model of divine revelation. His position is that when MI’s logic is modeled accordingly, MI is a promising description of the “very logic of Christian faith”.<sup>370</sup> My own position is that MI’s logic reduces neither to neither Klinefelter’s historical model nor to Stearns’s sacramental model.

Stearns rightly recognizes that MI uses sacramental language—that divine action and revelation come “in, with and under” our various knowledges. Furthermore, this sacramental language does describe in part how history mediates God’s grace and knowledge: history, the logical center of which is Jesus Christ, mediates the grace and knowledge of God in and to the concrete situations of all persons at all points in history.

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<sup>370</sup> As indicated in the previous chapter, these researchers are *reducing* MI’s logic to these models and setting each model against the other.

However, there is reason to think that MI, as Baillie conceives of it, cannot be reduced to either.

(1) Historically speaking, these models are not mutually exclusive models with regard to the mediation of God's grace.

Stearns is not clear what he means by a sacramental model. Consequently, we must infer what he might mean with his conjecture about MI's logic. He could be interpreted as maintaining that Baillie's concept of mediated immediacy reduces a theology of the sacraments. If so, then MI cannot be reduced to such a sacramental model, inasmuch as that model is opposed to the idea that revelation is mediated by history—as the historical model maintains. This is because a Lutheran sacramental model presupposes that the redeeming effects of Christ's atonement must themselves be mediated by historical events: it is "in, with, and under" the historical event of one's partaking of the elements, that the redeeming effects of Christ's atonement are mediated.

(2) MI's logic resists epistemological reduction to either model, according to Baillie.

Surely, what Stearns has in mind is more along the lines of this: MI's logic reduces to a logic that maintains that all of the universe can be sacramental in that anything can mediate immediate knowledge of God. We will return to that in moment, after considering Klinefelter's competing perspective.

What does it mean to say that "Baillie explicates the notion of a 'mediated immediacy' on an historical rather than a moral or sacramental model"<sup>371</sup>? Unfortunately, Klinefelter is not entirely clear on the matter. What is apparent is that he would derive ground for his claim from Baillie's thought, which he quotes at length.

"When Dr. Barth insists, as he does so often, that in history in general there is no revelation, since revelation interrupts history at a single point rather than informs it throughout, he is obviously thinking of history as something past and done with....Thinking of history in this way the Barthian theologians always oppose "The Christ of Faith" to the

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<sup>371</sup> Klinefelter, "Our Knowledge of God", p. 409.

“Christ of History”...I believe this dichotomy to be radically mistaken...and I believe Professor Tillich’s doctrine of Christ as the centre around which all history arranges itself to be altogether profounder than the Barthian attempt to see the rest of history in contrast with Christ. To Professor Tillich history is nothing dead and desiccated, “the presence of the past in the present” being essential to its very nature.... *It is only in the conception of history as something that happens in the present that the apparent contradiction in our doctrine of mediated immediacy can be reasonably resolved.*”<sup>372</sup>

Klinefelter adds that “Baillie contends that in the Christian revelation that we have to do with an experience of an entirely unique kind, ‘its uniqueness lying precisely in this conjunction of immediacy with mediacy—that is, in the fact that God reveals Himself to me only through others who went before, yet in so doing reveals Himself to me now’.”<sup>373</sup>

What is one to make of these competing if also opaquely stated verdicts? It appears that each position construes the modeling of MI’s logic in light of Baillie’s idea of revelation: MI’s logic reduces to either a sacramental or a historical idea of revelation and its logic must be understood and critiqued accordingly. As such, we must turn to MI’s function as a description of divine revelation to get to the issue of which, if either, of these positions is correct.

For one, we recall Baillie’s claim that revelation, as opposed to divine action, is contingent upon a human response: faith or trust in God. Thus, we can infer that a logic of faith’s response to divine action account for “history as something that happens in the present”. What does “account for” mean specifically, according to Baillie? It is clear from the above passage, as well as from our elucidation of MI’s logic in Chapter 2, that Baillie has in mind the mediation of divine action *qua* revelatory action. Specifically, MI’s logic maintains that revelation must be mediated by historical events (ontological claim) and by our discursive knowledge about those historical (epistemological claim). This includes faith in Jesus Christ (we might say, “special revelation”): one must have discursive or indirect knowledge about the historical event, or “Christ of History” who

<sup>372</sup> John Baillie, *OKG*, pp. 187-89. Cited in Klinefelter, “Our Knowledge of God”, pp. 408-9. Baillie’s italicized emphasis.

<sup>373</sup> John Baillie, *ibid.*, p. 185. Cited in *ibid.*, p. 409.

was Jesus, in order to have immediate saving knowledge of the “Christ of Faith” who is Jesus.

Based on what these researchers say, and do not say, my position is that a modified version of Stearns’s sacramental model best accommodates the logic of MI’s description of revelation. For one, the sacramental model of revelation suggested by Stearns can accommodate, with qualification, the historical model, whereas the historical model suggested by Klinefelter cannot. To contend for a sacramental model is not necessarily to deny that divine revelation can take place in concrete historical events. MI’s logic does itself suppose that all revelation occurs “in, with and under” historical events. However, it is possible to conceive of an idea of revelation which, not unlike Barth’s early thought, denies that all of history is sacramental of knowledge of God. Clearly, MI rejects such a position, as Klinefelter’s extended quotation of Baillie makes plain. Such a sacramental model would need, however, a qualification that Stearns does not provide when he maintains that MI’s logic reduces to a sacramental model: not every reality that exists in a sacramental universe (i.e., is a historical event) is equally endowed to mediate God’s self-disclosure: God, according to MI’s logic of revelation, is Personality; and God’s Presence is most immediate when humans are, *qua* personalities, engaged in *agapē*. MI’s logic does not deny that God can use anything to mediate God’s presence; neither does it deny that all of creation—a sacramental universe, if one will—says something about its Creator. However, MI’s logic does maintain that some media can mediate the fullness of God better than others—that some situations are better adept for putting one in what can become, to use (with Baillie) Tillich’s language, a “revelatory situation”: personal relations whose fellowship mediates, not unlike those relations which impacted young John’s spiritual development, *agapē*. Likewise, MI’s logic identifies Jesus the Mediator as the supreme mediator of Personality, and not, for example, objects ontologically grounded in the sacramental firmament, the capacity of such artifacts, such as sticks and stones, to mediate revelation as historical events (Rom. 1:19-21) notwithstanding.

This leads to another reason why the sacramental model, with additional qualification, is superior to Klinefelter’s reduction of MI’s logic to a historical model of revelation: Klinefelter’s proposed model appears to juxtapose a historical model of MI

with not only a sacramental model but also with a moral model of MI's logic. It may be the case that what Klinefelter has in mind is that MI's descriptive epistemology of revelation is not overtly expressed in Kantian terms. If so, then he is, of course, correct. Nonetheless, Klinefelter fail to delineate the differences. Moreover, he fails to acknowledge that MI's logic of revelation is in fact colored by, as well as supportive of, Baillie's moral-theological commitment to certain values—namely, *agapē*. His own extended quotation of Baillie suggests this moral commitment, when it notes that Jesus is the Centre around which all of history is arranged. Why does Baillie say that? Klinefelter need but turn back a page in *OKG* to find Baillie providing some rationale for why MI's logic identifies the Mediator as the Center of both history and faith: of all concrete histories, Baillie finds the history of the Mediator to be the most profound at mediating God's presence:

And to this day all the history that has Presence in it for me, all the history that has anything to say to me, all of the past through which I am addressed in the present, is centered in the story of the Cross. All that history has to say to me is somehow related to that.<sup>374</sup>

Does Stearns's interpretation of MI's logic do better service to MI's articulation of the values inherent in Baillie's idea of revelation. It does not. A review of his aforementioned lines of criticism shows that he makes no mention of this. This marks a deficiency for his interpretation: a modeling of MI's description of revelation along sacramental (or other) lines must include, as have I in Chapter 2, reference to Baillie's use of MI to affirm his commitment to values, such as *agapē*.

There are other lesser reasons for rejecting Klinefelter's account. For instance, if what Klinefelter says, and does not say, is taken at face value, a historical modeling of MI's logic would plausibly require the re-conceptualization of MI's language pertaining to the mediation of knowledge of God—namely, the jettisoning of the sacramental language altogether. MI's logic, however, relies most heavily upon sacramental language

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<sup>374</sup> *OKG*, p. 186.

to articulate the mediation of divine action and revelation —and this while maintaining that historical events mediate knowledge of God. In short, MI's sacramental language is not merely a matter of semantics; rather, MI is Baillie's attempt to conjoin conceptually both the sacramental and historical elements entailed in his idea of revelation. As such, MI's logic would appear to resist what appears to be Klinefelter's historical-reductionist hermeneutic.

To reduce MI's logic to a sacramental model which, according to Stearns, "hints" of a reduction to a Lutheran modification of the doctrine of transubstantiation, would appear also to run the risk of explanatory reductionism. Such a modeling would, for example, have to accommodate MI's supposition that God's Presence and grace are mediated "in, with and under" historical events, and thereby provide, amongst other graces, God's universal salvation to all humans (to varying degrees). The Lutheran sacramental model's conception of history's mediation of knowledge of God however disallows for a universal salvation mediated "in, with, and under" historical events. As such, MI's logic cannot be rightly construed as reducing to a strictly Lutheran, sacramental model. Consequently, I must reject Stearns's claim that MI's logic should be interpreted as being a strictly sacramental logic, despite my inclination to give Stearns the benefit of the doubt on his interpretation of this aspect of MI's logic—namely, that its sacramental-like logic and semantic is better interpreted as reference to a sacramental universe.

Additionally, we must bear in mind that while Klinefelter is certain that MI's logic explains Christian faith perfectly, he is also certain that MI's logic cannot be explained by any logic. Save that such reasoning is itself seemingly self-contradictory; Klinefelter's logic seemingly negates the possibility that one can explain how MI's logic must elucidate the logic of faith in Jesus Christ on a historical model. This too undermines my confidence in his prescription. Indeed, Klinefelter sounds not unlike Stearns, who also fails to produce the logic which might justify his position: persuaded that MI's (faulty) logic is sacramental, and hence inferior to his own model of mediated immediacy, Stearns never, to my knowledge, bequeathed to the research such insight.

My conclusion on this issue is that MI's logic reduces to neither Stearns's sacramental interpretation of MI's logic nor Klinefelter's historical interpretation of MI's



logic. My reasons for this conclusion are twofold: (1) neither researcher is entirely clear about what they mean; (2) a modified model of Stearns's (muddled) sacramental model would be the generally better line of interpretation, as a sacramental model would better accommodate, seemingly,<sup>375</sup> MI's descriptive epistemology of the historical and sacramental mediation of divine revelation.

## **6.7. CONCLUSION ON MAJOR RESEARCH ISSUE #1: MI'S MEANING**

My conclusion is that this chapter has resolved a host of minor research issues pertaining to MI's meaning. Clarifications which further enhance our understanding of MI's meaning (Chapter 2), they will prove helpful, when we subject MI's logic to criticism substantially more stringent than that which we have been afforded by MI's largely confused critics. That subjugation of MI to more contemporary criticism is found in Chapter 8's assessment of MI's potential for contemporary Christian thought.

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<sup>375</sup> For I am asking, in effect: "Which interpretation better describes MI's logic of the mediation of knowledge of God: humans' universal knowledge of God, as mediated "in, with and under" a sacramental universe (i.e., in and to humans' moral consciousness of value), or humans' knowledge about divine action, as mediated by historical events (i.e., the historical event Jesus Christ)?" If Baillie's thought is ambiguous about the primary locus for mediation of knowledge of God—Is it humans' universal moral consciousness of value, or the Christian church's proclamation of the Gospel?—it would seem impossible to be certain that that question can be answered correctly.

## **7. MI'S IMPORTANCE FOR BAILLIE'S MEDIATING THEOLOGY: SEVERELY UNDERESTIMATED**

The previous chapter considered research issues pertaining to MI's meaning and put to rest previously conflicting interpretations about MI's logic in particular. The present chapter builds on the now clarified understanding of MI's meaning to ascertain MI's importance for Baillie's MT, the second major research issue under examination.

In this chapter, I will draw exclusively from my diachronic trace (Chapters 3-5) to argue that MI is the most important concept for Baillie's MT, throughout its development (1926-1960). As support for my position, I will establish that there is one problem to which Baillie's MT returned throughout Baillie's career—the epistemological relationship between indirect (mediated) knowledge and direct (immediate) knowledge for knowledge of God—and demonstrate that Baillie uses MI for over thirty years to respond to what was a very important problem for his apologetic agenda. Specifically, I will show not only that MI important for Baillie's *OKG* (1939); MI is central to Baillie's early MT (pre-1939) and his latter MT (1939). As already ascertained, my argument will rely in part on the novel interpretation that an implicit form of MI exists in Baillie's MT prior to the concept's first explicit mention in *OKG*.

### **7.1. BAILLIE'S EARLY MEDIATING THEOLOGY REVISTED**

In order to assess MI's importance for Baillie's MT as a whole, I must do at least two things: (1) locate a problem which is important for Baillie's MT as a whole; (2) ascertain the extent to which Baillie appeals to MI as solution to that problem. I will begin by revisiting Baillie's early MT. My organizational scheme is to recall the basic contours of Baillie's argument against each position, to observe conceptual parallels between each of those and Baillie's thought on MI, and to draw conclusions on Baillie's early MT, in light thereof. I follow the same organizational scheme when I subsequently move to Baillie's latter MT. I then draw conclusions on the issue of MI's importance for Baillie's MT.

### 7.1.1. Baillie's Critique of the Romantic Theory of Religion

We recall from the diachronic trace of Baillie's early thought, Baillie's chief criticism of the romantic theory of religion. Baillie observes that it grounds knowledge of God in "pre-reflection" in the form of an "immediate feeling" (Schleiermacher, Pratt), "immediate experience" (James), or an "immediate vision" or "immediate [sensory] perception" (extreme mysticism). Baillie's argument against these types of immediacy is that religious faith is not grounded in direct knowledge of one's self—be it direct knowledge of one's feelings (of "absolute dependence upon God"; of "the More") nor in direct knowledge of one's sensory impressions (direct knowledge of a vision of God). Rather, Baillie's interrogation of religious consciousness discloses that the faith in God which epistemologically instigates religious consciousness is believed to be direct knowledge of *God*. Baillie also maintains that his direct knowledge of God is, paradoxically, also an indirect knowledge: it is mediated by cognitive insight—an insight which is "psychologically prior" to the movement from moral consciousness to religious consciousness. The epistemologies of the various romantic theories rightly emphasize the immediacy of religion's ground and deny that knowledge of God a highest inference—rationalism's primary shortcoming; however, its ideas of "immediacy" are excessive. Such a "sheltering of [religion] from the criticism of reflection of intelligence" in general fails to recognize, for instance, the commonplace "psychological fact" that "[p]ure feeling . . . is pure nonsense". The ordinary person, however, believes that religious feeling contains cognitive content, in that it is always mediating by discursive knowledge. Such is the same with regard to feelings related to religious experience in particular—feelings that, to the ordinary person, are "obviously mediated by the ideas present in our minds".<sup>376</sup> Save that it unduly marginalizes the mediation of knowledge of God by cognitive insight, its overemphasis on immediate pre-reflective knowledge wrongly grounds religion in self-knowledge—one's feelings, one's sensory impressions (God's audible "voice" or visual presence). However, direct knowledge of oneself is neither presupposed by the ordinary person in general, nor presupposed by the religious

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<sup>376</sup> "And if it be true of all feeling, it seems doubly true of religious feeling. For it would seem that this kind of feeling is dependent, not on cognition merely (which might mean only sense perception), but on nothing less than reflective intelligence . . . Hardly any kind of feelings, therefore, are more obviously mediated by the ideas present in our minds than are our religious feelings [emphasis mine]." *ROR*, pp. 79.

consciousness of the person who trusts God, as being that upon which religious faith is (descriptive epistemology), and hence, should be (normative epistemology), established. God is not an inference from self-examination of one's feelings; rather, the ordinary person believes that knowledge of God is our most direct knowledge. The romantic theory, however, not unlike the rationalist theory, makes knowledge of God unduly indirect: God is now an inference from a more immediate or pre-reflective self-knowledge. Better, argues Baillie, to maintain that the directness of religious consciousness is epistemologically grounded in a direct perception of other-knowledge—namely, God. This better reflects the belief content of religious consciousness: assent to trust in God (religious consciousness) is mediated by a direct knowledge of God that is mediated by moral consciousness of value—a latent knowledge whose cognitive content mediates the act of faith—that is, trusting in God (i.e., religious consciousness).

We see, then, that the issue for the early mediating theologian is the epistemological relationship between direct knowledge and direct knowledge for knowledge of ultimate reality: the romantic theory of religion correctly grounds religion in feelings accompanied by intuition; however, its interrogation of religious consciousness fails to recognize that direct knowledge of God is, if indeed psychologically contemporaneous with our knowledge of our internal states, yet also logically prior to them. A byproduct of its interrogation's undue marginalization of cognitive insight in the mediation of knowledge of God,<sup>377</sup> it results in a theory of religion also alien to the ordinary person's beliefs about feelings, religious or otherwise.

Observation: MI's epistemology maintains, with the romantic theory's epistemology, that knowledge of God is grounded in pre-reflection. MI's logic resists each of Baillie's lines of criticism against the romantic theory.

### **7.1.2. Baillie's Critique of the Rationalist Theory of Religion**

Conversely, the rationalist theory of religion's epistemology emphasizes that religious consciousness is mediated by discursive reflection. An emphasis welcomed by

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<sup>377</sup> "The fact is that religion has come to a sorry pass if it is driven to take refuge in nothing more solid than our feelings." *ROR*, p. 76.

Baillie, it militates against romanticism's epistemologically excessive emphasis on a pre-reflective immediacy as religion's ground. However, its epistemology, like the romantic theory's epistemology, wrongly takes its emphasis to an extreme. Aquinas's five ways; Anselm's ontological proof; Hegel's *Begriff*; Rashdall, Pflleiderer and Berkeley's Berkeleian theory of perception; Descartes' epistemological inward turn to the self—each, Baillie argues, overestimates the deliverances of discursive reason for the mediation of religious consciousness, thereby rendering each theory's aspiration to capture the essence of Reality but “an empty dream.”<sup>378</sup> To be sure, elaborates Baillie, the rationalist theory of religion correctly maintains that knowledge of ultimate reality must be mediated by humans' discursive reasoning; however, when it maintains that metaphysical speculation alone—that is, speculation without allowance for non-ratiocinative (immediate) knowledge of God in humans' moral consciousness of value—it provides, at best, ground for belief in a less-than-personal God—for belief in a Supreme Soul who is not “interest[ed] in our welfare”. Such a Supreme Soul, however, conflicts with ordinary persons' beliefs about God, the beliefs of whom typically suppose direct knowledge of a Personality, and no mere indirect knowledge about a concept. Indeed, mere propositional knowledge about an impersonal God strikes the ordinary person as “unreal”, in that it denies the knowledge of God directly disclosed in and to soldier's individual moral consciousness of value. There is, furthermore, the failed correspondence between method and training for knowledge of God: the ordinary person does not think knowledge of God the byproduct of formal training in metaphysical speculation and inferential reasoning; rather, in so believing knowledge of God to be directly available in and to his or her moral consciousness of value, the ordinary believes that it is rather the subsequent action of discursive reasoning that helps to persuade, while not logically demonstrating, that God-oriented religious praxis is a matter of “doing what's right”.

Additionally, and accordingly, there is the rationalist theory's allegedly failed account for the epistemological basis for religious belief. The ordinary person's religion thrives on a certitude for which the rationalist emphasis on discursive reasoning fails to give adequate account. It fails, for instance, to provide a certitude that one's values do correspond to those of a trans-subjective Being—the very certitude upon which religious

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<sup>378</sup> See *IOR*, p. 90.

faith “feeds” and develops: for an accurate interrogation of the religious consciousness of the ordinary person exhibits that, while knowledge of God is generally regarded by the ordinary person to be mediated by inferential processes, ordinary persons' religious consciousness (i.e. belief in God), astutely discerned, divulge the supposition that an immediate intuition of the Ideal Ought is Personality. An organic connection between religious consciousness and moral consciousness which is fundamental to religious certitude, it is not generally regarded by the ordinary person to be an indirect knowledge provided by inferential reasoning; rather it is generally regarded as being a direct knowledge whose logic presupposes: (1) a direct apprehension of God's Presence in and to one's moral consciousness of value—one might say, of the Given; (2) a non-inferentially totalized certitude of the Really Real's being Ultimate Value; (3) a direct knowledge *sui generis*, a mode of apprehension, and activity of the will—in sum, faith—which, “going beyond” metaphysical speculation, be that speculation concerned with concepts about God, the corporeal world, ourselves, and other persons, reduce not to intellectual assent to a highest inference.

We see, then, that the early mediating theologian's arguments against the rationalist theory of religion center upon the issue of the epistemological relationship between direct knowledge and indirect knowledge for knowledge of ultimate reality. The rationalist theory rightly conceives of knowledge of ultimate reality as being in some sense indirect, in that it conceives of such knowledge as being mediated by discursive reasoning and propositional knowledge. However, when it fails to allow for immediate knowledge of God, it makes knowledge of a God who is Personality excessively indirect. Hence, the rationalist theory of religion is, without modification, a hindrance to religion, including the ordinary person's understanding thereof. Indeed, the ordinary person *qua* believer in God rejects metaphysical arguments, be they *res cogitans* or *res extensa*, with a “clear conscience”, grounding their faith rather in what is believed to be direct knowledge of a God whose self-disclosure is the ground for, and never an inference from, either the corporeal world or the thinking self.

Not unlike the romantic theory, then, the rationalist theory's epistemology does not avail a concept of a personal God: for each epistemology reduces religious consciousness' ground to inferential knowledge about a Datum. Such abstraction,

however, conflicts with the ordinary person's belief—both with regard to religion's ground and with regard to the object of religious faith: the ordinary person grounds religion in a direct perception of God's Presence, not in an indirect knowledge about a second-order datum. God is not an Inference known indirectly through abstraction; rather God is Presence directly known in and to the moral consciousness which intimates, pre-religious consciousness, that religion is a matter of "doing what is right". Moreover, while the rationalist epistemology rightly maintains that religious consciousness (trust in God) is mediated by cognition, such cogitation, properly construed, must be considered but an indirect knowledge about God: faith's latent reflection upon the moral consciousness of value which mediates assent to religious consciousness. That epistemology is effectively bypassed, when the rationalist theory's epistemology aims for direct knowledge of God via ratiocination.<sup>379</sup>

Observation: MI's epistemology maintains, with the rationalist theory's epistemology, that knowledge of God is mediated by cognitive insight. MI's logic resists each of Baillie's criticism of the rationalist theory.

### 7.1.3. Baillie's Critique of Kant's Theory of Religion

Baillie's criticism of Kant's theory of religion has been found to center upon Kant's conceptualization of the processes involved in the transition from moral consciousness to religious faith: Baillie maintains that Kant *qua* philosopher espouses a theory of religion whose epistemology effectively reduces religious faith to a logical implicate of practical reason—this despite Kant's seeming affinity, as evidenced in his abandoned fourth critique, for a concept of religious faith whose ground transcends the logical entailments of practical reason. Kant correctly maintains that there is an organic "determinative connection" between religious faith and moral consciousness. The ordinary person's testimony also supports Kant's position that knowledge of God's is in a sense indirect—mediated by reflection upon the logical structure of moral consciousness.

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<sup>379</sup> "Rationalism seems to have been right in insisting that religion is grounded in intelligent insight, but wrong as to the sources of that insight. Romanticism seeks to have been right in seeking a foundation for religion which should render it independent of scientific and metaphysical speculation, but wrong in thinking to find such a foundation in some religion of the mind that lies below the level of reflective thought." *ROR*, p. 87.

However, the ordinary person does not ground religious faith's putative knowledge of God in a logical implicate of the practical reason, be that implicate construed as either an act or as a mode of apprehension. The ordinary person conceives of faith, as both apprehension and act, as a direct knowledge not established by Kant's practical reason.<sup>380</sup>

Baillie argues that the better conceptualization of the determinative epistemological connection between moral and religious consciousness will contend for direct and indirect knowledge of God. Baillie uses this language in 1928:

Our fundamental moral values are given to us directly, and intuited by us directly; but for everything in religion that goes beyond this direct intuition of moral value, there is required the activity of *faith* [underlined emphasis mine].<sup>381</sup>

Elsewhere in Baillie's early thought, he provides specifics about the indirect and indirect knowledge's and processes involved in the cognitive-psychological epistemology of religious faith (i.e., religious consciousness).

The psychological order of events is not that we first, by purely intellectual paths of discovery, reach the certainty of God's existence and worthiness to be trusted, and then put our trust in Him and live our lives accordingly. Rather is it that out of a certain kind of living, and a certain attentiveness to the deeper significance of such living, there grows up in our hearts a loyal and steadfast trust in that Reality within which our lives are set, and then we see that within such trust is latently and germinally contained an acceptance of the propositions (let us say) that God exists and he is good.<sup>382</sup>

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<sup>380</sup> "Surely the real root of our difficulty with Kant lies not in the nature of the bond which he forges between faith and morality but rather in the kind of morality to which religion is thus attached and in terms of which it accordingly comes to be interpreted. If morality means only keeping the commandments—"obedience to a categorical imperative"—we may feel that it provides too narrow a basis for Christian faith to rest upon." *IOR*, p. 274.

<sup>381</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 246. Baillie's italicized emphasis. "It is plain enough . . . that it was not as a result of an argument that faith first arose in the world and that it is not as the result of an argument that it normally arises in men's minds to this day." *Ibid.*, p. 360.

<sup>382</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 377.



In 1929, then, Baillie maintains that religious faith is indirect in that it is mediated by reflection—which, in turn, mediates assent to belief in God’s existence—which, in turn, enables humans to perceive with renewed clarity God—Whom moral consciousness has latently believed to exist all along. Baillie conceives of trust in God (i.e., religious consciousness) as being indirect knowledge in several senses—it is mediated by the logical structure of the moral consciousness; mediated by reflective inferential thinking upon humans’ moral consciousness of value; mediated propositional knowledge derived from our individual experiences. All of this mediation sounds fairly Kantian, thus far. The difference, however, comes out when Baillie asserts that this mediation must mediate a direct knowledge perception, as both the conditions for the possibility of religious consciousness and religious consciousness’ latent reflection on human experience testify to faith’s being grounded in a direct perception. For when we are dealing with religion

We are dealing here directly with the things that we know to matter most—with justice and honor, with character and the will to serve. And however uncertain our hold upon the divine significance of these things may sometime seem to be, yet when it is within our grasp we recognise it to be the only quite authentic certainty there is [emphases mine].<sup>383</sup>

This direct and certain knowledge of the existence of Goodness, the only quite authentic certainty according to Baillie, differs not only in degree from scientific certainty, but also in kind.<sup>384</sup> This certainty, called faith, is a gift from God.<sup>385</sup> Accordingly, its veridicality is authenticated not by discursive reasoning—i.e., practical reason—but rather from living according to what the individual’s moral consciousness intuitively understands

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<sup>383</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 375.

<sup>384</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 374.

<sup>385</sup> "[T]he graces of character in which faith takes its rise are graces not of satisfied achievement but rather of *receptiveness*; and faith, when it comes, comes not as a thing accomplished but as a thing found—not as a meritorious performance on our part but as a gift on God's part." *Ibid.*, p. 368.

directly or immediately to be of value. This precipitates a developmental process characterized by an increasingly clear “voice of conscience”—an increased “awareness” and “consciousness” (perception) of higher values situated within a gradated valuational field—coupled with the development of a volition more inclined to act in light of such guidance.<sup>386</sup> It is in such concrete situations characterized ideally with moral development, that God encounters each person *qua* personality to provide subjective certainty that the individual is, in both thought and deed, living a life whose moral evolution is approximating the highest value.<sup>387</sup>

This is to say that, for Baillie, it is in this concrete activity of faith—in praxis reflective of what one indirectly-directly knows as highest value—that one, approaching a goodness of living, transitions from moral consciousness to the religious consciousness to which moral consciousness is organically connected (both epistemologically and, ultimately, ontologically): for religious consciousness, initiated by religious faith (trust in God), is mediated by a steadfast assurance that there is a personal Good, and no mere impersonal Apex of Being, to Whom one’s intuitive sense of oughtness ontologically and epistemologically corresponds—that is, a Whom to Whom one should, out of gratitude for the Goodness received, give one’s allegiance.

When, however, Kant insists that practical reason should mediate the assent from moral consciousness to religious belief, Kant’s logic of religious faith secures—at best—merely indirect knowledge—and then, indirect knowledge of an impersonal god: an “Apex of all Being” in whom one should trust, based on ratiocinative operations, according to Baillie. But again, Baillie maintains that Kant should contend for a direct knowledge of God’s Presence—one mediated by the living of one’s life as a complete personality: “It [religion] is no longer a matter of giving assent merely to propositions; it is a matter of placing honourable reliance in a Reality which claims our loyalty.”<sup>388</sup> Reliance or trust in Personality—this better reflects the ordinary person’s perspective on the nature of the determinative connection between moral consciousness and religious consciousness, as it lays emphasis on the importance of praxis for developing deeper

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<sup>386</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 361.

<sup>387</sup> “To the man who follows faithfully such light as he possesses there must in the end come all the light he needs.” *Ibid.*, p. 370.

<sup>388</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 376.

insight into moral consciousness' impact on religious consciousness. Indeed, it is the testimony of the human race that

The mere passive contemplation of the moral law never led any man to a realisation of its deeper meaning, but only to an active surrender to its ever-developing demands. Argument therefore here is at a far-reaching disadvantage, that it carries conviction only in proportion to the depth of each man's moral consciousness, and that in the same proportion it is likely to have been already anticipated by the intuitive understanding.<sup>389</sup>

Jesus himself (in whom the Goodness anticipated by the intuitive understanding most fully dwelt) would appear to have conceived of the transition from moral consciousness to religious consciousness as being no mere assent to a set of propositions, but rather a courageous surrender to and trust in God's love.<sup>390</sup>

Again, the issue for Baillie is the relationship between direct and indirect knowledge for knowledge of God. Is the moral consciousness' epistemological movement toward faith in God (i.e. religious consciousness) ultimately precipitated by direct knowledge (intuition) or indirect knowledge (logical demonstration)? Kant's theory of religion is criticized for its ambiguity about how these knowledge types relate to each other for knowledge of God: Kant rightly recognizes that the transformation is initiated with belief in an "Is" to Whom our immediate intuition of "oughtness" corresponds; Kant, however, "wavers" with regard to how they are ultimately connected epistemologically. Baillie's criticism of Kant's theory of religion raises thus the fundamental question of whether Kant conceives of religious faith as a logical entailment whose validity is established by the postulates inferred from the practical reason's schematization of the moral consciousness' sense of "oughtness"; or, rather, if faith presupposes a "determinative connection" between religious consciousness and moral

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<sup>389</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 361-362.

<sup>390</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 377. This also evidences Baillie's position that it is "rational" for the Christian theologian to elucidate the "highest value" mediated by humans' "cognitive insight" into the "logical structure" of moral consciousness.

consciousness, the deliverances of which transcend logical demonstration. Yet whereas Kant seems to waver, the religious consciousness of humankind, on Baillie's interpretation, does not: the ordinary person's theory of religion does not reduce religious faith to mere discursive knowledge about a logical implicate of practical reason; rather, the ordinary person's religious consciousness unhesitatingly contends for a religious faith whose direct knowledge of God transcends the logical implicates of a practical reason that denies direct knowledge of God.

Observation: MI's epistemology, unlike Kant's epistemology, reflects Baillie's understanding of the ordinary person's understanding of the logic of religious faith. For one, it maintains that religious faith is a direct perception of God's presence. Secondly, it maintains that religious consciousness is epistemologically connected to moral consciousness: it is mediated by reflexive thinking upon the moral consciousness' logical structure. Thirdly, MI advances the ordinary person's claim that religious faith's certainty is mediated by a variety of knowledges (self-knowledge, other-knowledge, world-knowledge, God-knowledge), though neither epistemologically established by logical entailment nor ontologically grounded in a Logical Implicate: faith in God is an immediate "psychological certitude" of the veridicality of the God-human relationship, God's moral injunctions included. Fourthly, MI maintains that immediate knowledge of God is grounded in God's encounter with humans *qua* personalities—this, as “in, with and under” individual lives-as-lived, and not as merely thought—and not in the human *qua* logician's abstraction of the practical reason's abstraction of the moral consciousness. All of this is in keeping with Baillie's position that neither religious faith-as-lived in general, nor the morality that is the praxis of the Christian faith in particular, is prompted by humans' unquestioning obedience to knowledge about a highest value: rather, history shows that religion "feeds upon" direct knowledge of God's gracious self-disclosure in and to the soul.<sup>391</sup>

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<sup>391</sup> “Is not the doctrine of the summum bonum itself already a religious doctrine, and indeed the central doctrine of all religion?” *Ibid.*, p. 275.

#### 7.1.4. Baillie's Critique of Theological Intuitionism

Baillie's arguments against theological intuitionism have been found to center upon Troeltsch and Otto's shared claim that direct knowledge of an immediately evident, religious *a priori* is possible. Troeltsch's theological intuitionism rightly grounds religion in both a direct knowledge (intuition) and indirect knowledge (mediated by cognitive insight). As such, his theory is an advance over the romantic theory. However, his epistemology incorrectly grounds this indirect-direct knowledge of God in a religious *a priori*. Baillie maintains that religious consciousness is not a self-contained consciousness; rather, it epistemologically and organically links to moral consciousness. When Troeltsch, in his quest for the epistemologically "immediately evident", severs the epistemological link between religious consciousness and moral consciousness, he makes the ground for religious faith unduly direct. Religious faith, properly conceived, is mediated by "cognitive insight" into moral consciousness (indirectly-direct) knowledge of value; mediated by the individual's knowledge about the world; mediated by assent to belief in the Ideal Ought's being God whom objectively exists. Troeltsch's pursuit of the religious *a priori* rejects the moral consciousness' mediation of knowledge of God, however. To compound matters, his logic fails to provide a "deduction of the categories of the religious consciousness" that he has epistemologically isolated, thereby making further indirect what insight might be gleaned from his analysis. Otto's theological intuitionism, Baillie maintains, rightly tries to reforge the epistemological connection between religious consciousness and moral consciousness. However, his logic for doing so is convoluted. This is readily evidenced in Otto's positing of a "thought-connection which is immediately self-evident and yet is entirely devoid of logical necessity"—but one of many facet of Otto's logic which baffles Baillie.

Observation: MI's epistemology, in keeping with Baillie's criticism of Otto and Troeltsch's epistemologies, does not attempt to ground knowledge of God in an *a priori* situated in religious consciousness.

### 7.1.5. Baillie's Critique of Neo-Kantian Theories of Religion

We have found that Baillie's attack on Ritschl and Herrmann's Neo-Kantian theories of religion concerns the limitations placed by each on the Christian theologian's knowledge of the mediation of divine action. Baillie's criticism of Ritschl's theory centers upon Ritschl's method, that method's byproducts, and their collective epistemological implication for the interrogation and understanding of religious consciousness. Ritschl's neo-Kantian theory of religion rightly affirms an organic connection between morality and religion—the “relation of moral value to real existence”—as well as insists upon the “the reality of the ideal world”. Its reflection on “independent-value judgments” as “ethical judgments” is also said by Baillie to be of practical value to religion, in that militates against pragmatic theories of religion.<sup>392</sup> Nonetheless, Ritschl's theory of religion compromises the Christian theologian's ability to understand how direct knowledge of God is mediated in and to both the moral and religious consciousness of humankind. This is because his theory's method places severe constraints on the Christian theologian's investigation of moral consciousness, religious consciousness, and how they are related, contends Baillie. Baillie, however, is persuaded that religious consciousness admits of many gradations—this, in part, because religious consciousness is mediated by inferential knowledge which is not the same for every person. For example, religious consciousness is mediated (or “framed”<sup>393</sup>) by knowledge about one's religious tradition. Consequently, the Christian theologian's “interrogation” of religious consciousness requires, according to Baillie, an elucidation of how knowledge about historical events (e.g., Jesus Christ) is thought to mediate the development of what is humankind's organically developing religious consciousness—a development whose epistemological underpinning is, as we have seen, conceived as ontologically grounded in (though, not epistemologically reducible to) humankind's moral consciousness of “value” (in and to which God universally resides).

Ritschl's method denies the Christian theologian a full-fledged investigation into how that universally direct knowledge of God is mediated by the diverse range of human

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<sup>392</sup> Ritschl's distinction between independent and concomitant value-judgments must be preserved if, e.g., philosophical theology is to avoid grounding religion in a pragmatic criteria of truth— “that all value judgments can be reduced, without remainder, to judgments of value.”

<sup>393</sup> Likewise, Baillie speaks of knowledge of God as a “frame of reference” in his later thought. See *SPG*, Ch. 7, pp. 130-148.

experience, restricting the theologian's interrogation of religious consciousness to persons who belong to the theologian's present, religious sect, its historical development, included. Baillie, contending that the religious community is far bigger than one's tradition, rejects that methodological constraint; rejects as well Ritschl's "inhospitable attitude toward whatever religious insight stands outside of the Christian tradition"; and insists that the modern Christian theologian must also should reject the arbitrary demarcation between religious experience and revelation<sup>394</sup> that underwrites the Ritschlian agenda—all of this in favor of an examination and elucidation of how the religious experience of humankind as a whole, rather, is mediated by knowledge about historical events, those historical events apprehended as disclosing God's presence outside of one's religious tradition proper, included. Here is the method of promise for arriving at a fuller understanding of religious consciousness' diverse manifestation of The God known universally and directly in our moral consciousness of value, maintains Baillie.

We recall that the Baillie finds several difficulties with Herrmann's theory of religion, and that Baillie's criticism centers on Herrmann's epistemology of religious experience, Herrmann's elucidation of the relationship between direct and indirect knowledge more particularly still. Specifically, Herrmann fails to elucidate how faith in Jesus Christ (Christian religious experience) arises out indirect knowledge about Jesus ("the historical fact of Jesus") which, in turn, is mediated by the fact of duty's claim upon our moral consciousness of value. What is Herrmann's solution for relating what is direct and indirect in Christian knowledge of God? It is, according to Baillie, that Jesus makes an "impression" upon humans' moral consciousness of value, thereby prompting humans' assent to Christian faith. This description lacks precision. Such is the same with Herrmann's description of how knowledge of God is mediated to non-Christian religion consciousness: "we cannot know how" this mediation is accomplished. Herrmann's allegedly muddled description of how knowledge of God is both mediated to moral consciousness and apprehended by religious consciousness further evidences that Herrmann's epistemology has "broken the chain of reason" on the nature of the assent to

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<sup>394</sup> Indeed, "to stop short anywhere within the religious experience of our race is to express a purely arbitrary preference and to draw a line for ourselves where no line exists." *IOR*, p. 62.

Christian faith. Indeed, Herrmann's epistemology suggests that faith is not "an act of intelligent insight" at all. Baillie maintains that the "act" of faith must not, however, break the chain of reason: its epistemology must have "some logical basis" mediated by an "act of intelligent insight" that derives in part from (i.e., is mediated by) humans' moral intuition of value.

Herrmann's epistemology, then, allegedly fails to elucidate: (1) how assent to Christian religious consciousness (i.e. Christian "faith") is mediated by knowledge about and knowledge of the Mediator; (2) how knowledge about "the historical fact" of the Mediator mediates knowledge of God in and to humans' moral consciousness; (3) how Christian religious consciousness is epistemologically connected to moral consciousness and (4) non-Christian religious consciousness; (5) how that epistemology can be applied to an interrogation and understanding of religious consciousness in general, because of the epistemological breakdown in Herrmann's would-be idea of general revelation; that fundamental to difficulties (1-5), is that it "breaks the chain of reason", when it (6) fails to conceive of knowledge of God as "as act of intelligent insight"; and that that all of this (1-6) makes Herrmann's (7) understanding of religious experience "excessively narrow".

In an allusion to Herrmann's neo-Kantian-indebted confusion about how to construct a theology of general revelation, Baillie wryly remarks that

We cannot be aware of an element of paradox in Herrmann's declaration that 'he does not know' through what media the knowledge of God comes to men who have no knowledge of Christ. Would it be impardonable to suggest that he *ought* to know?<sup>395</sup>

With what "media" would the modern Christian theologian reconnect Herrmann's chain of reason with the historical fact of Jesus; reconnect our moral consciousness of duty and CRE's epistemologically necessary assent to faith in Jesus Christ; reconnect Christian revelation with the universal theory of revelation that epistemologically mediates

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<sup>395</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 61.



humans' recognition of, and trust in, Jesus? In 1929 Baillie contends that the solution requires a concept which: faithfully describes CRE; epistemologically integrates that description with one faithful to our moral consciousness of Divine Love; and elucidates, from a Christian theological perspective, how religious consciousness comes to recognize, through divine revelation, the Mediator who is the fullest expression of Divine Love:

The answer must surely be that this is not another fact at all. The experience of the inner life of Jesus is but the moral experience itself in a supreme exemplification of it. It is the same word; but it is the Word made flesh . . . [This] Divine Love is sufficiently revealed to us in our common human values . . . Revelation alone leaves godlessness, as Paul says, 'without excuse'. But 'values reside in the individual' rather than in the abstract and the general, and hence our values become both deepened and fortified by every new incarnation that meets us in experience. So to our human frailty there have been from time to time granted certain more 'special' revelations of the Divine Love. Supreme among such has been the revelation of God in the soul of Jesus. God . . . hath now spoken unto us through a more perfect Love and Goodness than any that come before. In this Love and Goodness men have found . . . 'the portrait of the invisible God'.<sup>396</sup>

Observation: MI meets all of the criteria prescribed by Baillie in 1929 for a description of CRE. MI's epistemology of religious experience describes (1-5), does conceive of knowledge of God as mediated (6) by an act of intelligent insight, and does emphasize that assent to Christian religious consciousness is mediated in particular by personal relations characterized by Divine Love. Furthermore, MI describes all of these media as pointing to Jesus, the incarnational, logical and historical center (following Tillich) of the mediation of God's grace. MI also lends itself to a description of general revelation, unlike Herrmann's epistemology, on Baillie's reading.

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<sup>396</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 297. Baillie cites Romans I: 20, II: 15 and Col. I: 15. Baillie's remark is informative as it finds Baillie arguing for certain "special", general revelations—a concept which will find fuller development in his latter thought.

## 7.2. CONCLUSIONS ON BAILLIE'S EARLY MEDIATING THEOLOGY

Baillie's early works evidence a mediating theologian preoccupied with religious experience, though vying, if somewhat incidentally, for his idea of Christian revelation. Underwriting Baillie's apologetic strategy is Baillie's epistemology of universal revelation: God directly discloses God to all of humanity in all humans' moral consciousness of value. Within the context of this apologetic agenda and epistemological framework, Baillie argues for the supremacy of CRE (i.e., the Christian religion). In so doing, Baillie engages manifold competing theologies and philosophies, arguing that each theory of religion is, to varying degrees, unreal to the reality of religion, as each advances an idea of Reality antagonistic to the deliverances of religious consciousness, Christian or otherwise. As support for this general line of criticism, Baillie centers his arguments on each theory's epistemology and maintains that when its epistemology makes knowledge about the self or the world the primary ground for knowledge for God, such a move invariably compromises knowledge of God: it makes knowledge of God too indirect, often to the point that knowledge of God, Personality, is practically unknowable.

### 7.2.1. Baillie's Early MT: Its Apology's Focus

We have found Baillie repeatedly attacking a host of theories and thinkers on the ground that they fail to provide an adequate conceptualization of the epistemological relationship between indirect knowledge and direct knowledge for knowledge of God: one theory makes knowledge of God too indirect, by overestimating the mediation of religious experience by conscious ratiocination; another makes knowledge of God too indirect, by deemphasizing the cognitive insight that mediates religious consciousness, in favor of the other extreme, the grounding of knowledge of God in pre-reflective 'immediacy'. On the strength of the diachronic trace of Baillie's early MT, I therefore conclude that the most important problem for Baillie's early MT is:

The epistemological relationship between indirect knowledge and indirect knowledge  
for knowledge of God.

As this is the mediating theologian's primary problem, I shall denote it with MTPP.

### 7.2.2. Baillie's Early MT: MI'S Nascent Presence

What is Baillie's solution to MTPP? Repeatedly, Baillie contends for what I am calling an "indirectly direct" epistemology of religious experience in his early MT. That Baillie does rely heavily on a conceptualization of religious as being an indirectly direct epistemology of knowledge of God (hereafter, ID) is evidenced in the claims advanced by the apologist in his analyses of, and arguments against, the many theories documented in the diachronic trace. Repeatedly, Baillie contends that a faithful description of religious consciousness will conceive of faith in God as being occasioned by knowledge that is both direct—immediate knowledge of God is not *derived* from human reason, be that reasoning metaphysical, scientific, philosophical, theoretical or practical, *a priori* or *a posteriori* in orientation—and indirect: it is mediated by human reason ("cognitive insight"), including various knowledge types and valuational grades (e.g., scientific, logical, aesthetic; reflection on moral consciousness), none of which can provide the Ground for religious experience that is *sui generis*: grounded in immediate knowledge of Personality. All of this is in keeping with Baillie's thought on: the aims of apologetics; the epistemological limitations of language; Baillie's conceptualization of the epistemological relationship between second-order knowledge about truths (reflective, mediated knowledge) and first-order knowledge of (pr-reflective, immediate) Reality and realities; and Baillie's concept of MI (see Chapter 2 for all of the above).

I therefore conclude that:

In Baillie's early MT, we see a nascent version of MI.

Partial support for my position derives from my observations provided at the end of each of the just-mentioned sections: here we have found close conceptual parallels between ID and MI. This support, however, derives primarily from my analysis of MI's logic (Chapter 6), the diachronic trace of Baillie's early MT (Chapter 3) and from my modeling of MI's logic (Chapter 2).

### 7.3. BAILLIE'S LATTER MEDIATING THEOLOGY REVISTED

#### 7.3.1. *Our Knowledge of God* (1939)

Turning now to a brief reconsideration of Baillie's later MT (1939-1962), we recall from the diachronic trace that Baillie's latter MT develops its criticism of the rationalist theory of religion in particular, increasingly debates neo-orthodox theology, and engages the analytic tradition.

##### 7.3.1.1 MI: **Contra scholastic orthodoxy's depersonalized Really Real**

In *OKG*, Baillie remarks that “The conception of a sacramental universe . . . expresses the truth that lay behind St. Thomas's natural theology, while being free from the errors in which the latter became involved.”<sup>397</sup> What is true about Aquinas's natural theology? We have found Baillie supporting its position that knowledge *about* God is mediated by our sensory-derived knowledge about a sacramental universe. Its error, however, is that it makes that direct knowledge a knowledge about God's effects in a sacramental universe. Rather, a sacramental universe mediates, paradoxically, an immediate knowledge of God. As support for this position, Baillie appeals to MI.

YET, though we are more directly and intimately confronted with the presence of God than with any other presence, it does not follow that He is ever present to us *apart* from all other experiences . . .

. . . No one of the four subjects of our knowledge—ourselves, our fellows, the corporeal world, and God—is ever presented to us except in conjunction with all three of the others . . . .

. . . We do not know God through the world, but we know him with the world; and in knowing Him with the world, we know him as its ground. Nature is not an argument for God, but it is a sacrament of Him. Just as in the sacrament of Holy Communion the Real Presence of Christ is given (if the Lutheran phrase may here be used without prejudice) ‘in, with and under’ the bread and wine, so in a wider sense

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<sup>397</sup> *OKG*, pp. 179.

the whole corporeal world may become sacramental to us of the presence of the Triune God.<sup>398</sup>

When Aquinas makes knowledge of God's effects in the universe our most direct knowledge, he commits the rationalist fallacy: making God an indirectly known, abstracted It. "We can know *that God is* and *what He is not*."<sup>399</sup>

Observation: When MI emphasizes that knowledge of God is mediated by knowledge about the universe, though rejects the position that direct knowledge about the effects of God can demonstrate God's existence, it is contending that knowledge of God is a direct or immediate knowledge of Personality.

### 7.3.1.2 MI and the Barthian denial of immediate knowledge of God

We have also found Baillie maintaining in *OKG* that Barth oversimplifies the spiritual situation of the western world, when he denies that all humans have immediate knowledge of God. Baillie argues that this misreading is backed by anthropology that conflicts with the human situation properly interpreted, a doctrine of revelation excessively narrow, and a concept of God's grace which unduly limits the scope of God's grace. Baillie counters with the position that a truer account of the human situation will contend that all humans have an immediate knowledge of God through God's gracious self-disclosure "in, with and under" a sacramental universe, albeit an immediate knowledge which can be and is repressed. Indeed,

Great as is the service which Dr. Barth has rendered us in weaning us from the enticements of one-sided immanentism, he has tended to lead us astray in his

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<sup>398</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 178-179.

<sup>399</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 109. 'But as to what He positively is— 'the divine essence (*substantia*) so far exceeds in its immensity every form to which our intellect reaches that we are unable to apprehend it in such a way as to know what it is.' Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles*, i.14. Cited in Baillie, *ibid.*, p. 110.

apparent complete rejection of the truth for which immanentism and mysticism alike contend.<sup>400</sup>

We have found that Baillie's reliance upon MI is rather important for Baillie's criticism of Barth in *OKG*. As such, I shall allocate sections to my observation.

Observation (extended):

### **7.3.1.3 God's transcendence and immanence: resetting the balance**

MI provides Baillie a concept for resetting the balance between God's transcendence and immanent Presence in and to creation—a balance disrupted by Barth's denial of universal immediate knowledge of God, in favor of an overemphasis on God's transcendence.

MI, like Barth's theology, does emphasize God's transcendence. For instance, it contends that knowledge of God is not entirely direct, but rather mediated by “knowledge of ourselves, our fellows, the corporeal world”. God's transcendence is also affirmed by the position that one cannot as it were infer God's existence: there is no “unaided’ natural knowledge” of God.<sup>401</sup> Accordingly, MI maintains, with Barth, that knowledge of God is always a matter of divine initiative. Moreover, the concept emphasizes God's "otherness" when it contends that knowledge of God is not on the same logical footing as knowledge of other minds, but is “logically prior” to the other knowledge types (corporeal world, humans, oneself). The concept emphasizes the epistemological disjunction between knowledge of God and knowledge of other minds furthermore in that, when functioning as an analogy, it is said to be an imperfect analogy: knowledge of God is of a complexity and directness which surpasses humans' knowledge of human minds. Here, as with Barth, is an acknowledgment of the inability to demonstrate God's existence *via analogia*. MI, also like Barth, rejects the claim that all humans have an inborn, innate knowledge of God: not one of the four knowledges is temporally

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<sup>400</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 237. Baillie indicates in a footnote that refers to the aforementioned remark, that the issue here revolves around Barth's interpretation of immanence as God's “*presence to*, and not as *presence in*” the world.

<sup>401</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 43.

antecedent to the other (i.e., an inborn, innate knowledge cannot temporally precede knowledge from experience.) The concept also emphasizes God's transcendence in that it, like Barth, presupposes that the human's *capacity* for knowledge of God is contingent upon God's grace as extended to the *imago dei* via divine disclosure.<sup>402</sup>

Nevertheless, MI also contends for an immanentism unduly rejected by Barth, according to Baillie. This is apparent in MI's idea of immediacy. For example, although MI's logic assumes that God is transcendent in the sense that God is quantitatively distinct from all of creation, its logic does not contend that God is wholly other in the sense of God's being qualitatively distinct—either ontologically or epistemologically—from humans: the human situation, presupposes MI's logic, is that the *imago dei* mirrors something of the form and content of God, as human nature is merely "a good thing spooled". It is within this context that we can appreciate the importance of MI's idea of immediacy for Baillie's critique of Barth's overemphasis on God's transcendence.

#### **7.3.1.4 The Christ of Faith and the Christ of History: a reconciliation attempted**

In order to undermine Barth's rejection of universal immediate knowledge of God, Baillie has to persuade that God continually invades history to provide Self-disclosure beyond the historical event of the Mediator: save that this would lend support to Baillie's claim for universal immediate knowledge of God and, with that, the immanence of God's presence denied by Barth; it would also lend credibility to Baillie's broader claim: allegiance to Barth's dogmatic prescription for an ailing human situation comes with ill effects: a surrendering of those insights for which immanentism and mysticism have contended—namely, that God's presence is disclosed in and to historical events beyond the event of the Incarnation.

Christ, [Barth] says, comes vertically into history and He  
*alone* reveals God; the history into which He comes does

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<sup>402</sup> Baillie is "the last to hold that the capacity for spiritual life was given first and the reality of it afterwards, that God first created a being to whom he could reveal Himself, and afterwards revealed Himself to that being . . . Man was not reasonable prior to his apprehension of the first inkling, but in that apprehension his rationality is born. I find no difficulty of principle . . . in Dr. Barth's conception of a capacity to receive revelation which is given in and with the revelation itself." *Ibid.*, pp. 22-23.

not reveal God *at all*. Thinking of history in this way, the Barthian theologians always oppose ‘the Christ of Faith’ to ‘the Christ of History’. History, they say, cannot give you truth about Christ; only faith can do that. I believe this dichotomy to be radically mistaken.<sup>403</sup>

To its credit, Barth's thought maintains that the Incarnation is God's “vertical” invasion of History; that Jesus is (as did Herrmann, Ritschl and Luther) the Mediator of God in history; that the historical event of the Incarnation is ontologically necessary for human salvation; that Christian faith requires a subjective appropriation of Jesus' being the truth.<sup>404</sup> However, Baillie thinks Barth's “dichotomy radically mistaken,” when its dialectic rejects Baillie's competing position: “there is nothing in our experience, which may not be the medium of God's revelation”.<sup>405</sup>

That Baillie would think Barth's thought fundamentally flawed on this issue reflects what he found in our consideration of MI's logic (Chapter 2): MI's logic maintains that God's self disclosure “*continually* invades” a sacramental universe “in, with and under” whose history God provides an immediate knowledge of God—one available to all persons, albeit it mediated by any number of historical events, depending on the particularities of each person's concrete situation. Accordingly, Baillie uses MI to contend, contra Barth, there is universal immediate knowledge of God. Specifically, he uses MI to meet objectives that would substantiate belief in such knowledge: (1) to provide an elucidation of how history happens in the present, and (2) to attempt reconciliation between the “Christ of Faith” with the “Christ of History”. That the former is a key objective for MI has already been acknowledged with Baillie's emphasized remark that: *It is only in the conception of history as something that happens in the present that the apparent contradiction in our doctrine of mediated immediacy can be reasonably resolved.*<sup>406</sup> With regard to Baillie's latter objective, Baillie's counters Barth's claim that history provides no revelation at all about the “Christ of History”, by using MI to reconcile the “Christ of Faith” with the “Christ of History”. Specifically, he maintains

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<sup>403</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 188.

<sup>404</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 96.

<sup>405</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 222.

<sup>406</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 189. Baillie's italicized emphasis.



that we must conceive of Jesus Christ's being the logical center of history which illuminates the meaning of other historical events, including those mighty events “in, with and under” which God has divinely acted and divinely acts. According to Baillie,

Salvation means fellowship with God. The state of being saved is the state of being in fellowship with Him. To believe that some men are *wholly* out of such fellowship is the same as to believe that they are totally corrupt; for good in the Creator, who is the alone Source of all the good there is. But ... a creature from which the image of God was thus wholly effaced would no longer be a man at all.<sup>407</sup>

Hence, while God's self-disclosure in the "Christ of History" is ontologically necessary for the redemption of humankind, and the full realization of *fides salvifica*, knowledge about of this Event—i.e., trust in the "Christ of Faith"—is not epistemologically necessary for salvation. How does MI's logic explain the mediation of Christ's redemptive effects across history? We have found that when MI identifies Christ as the logical center of history, it lays emphasis upon humans' knowledge “of” others.

We have to face the fact that we have to do here with an experience of an entirely unique kind, its uniqueness lying precisely in this conjunction of immediacy with mediacy—that is, in the fact that God reveals Himself to me only through others who went before, yet in so doing reveals himself to me now.<sup>408</sup>

This fellowship is characterized by *agapē* and self-service to others<sup>409</sup>—that is, by those historical events which, characterized by personalities at their best, most profoundly mediate God's love and grace, save fellowship with the Mediator, the Christ of Faith, in whom God dwelt. MI's logic also emphasizes the importance of knowledge “about” the

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<sup>407</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 96.

<sup>408</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 185.

<sup>409</sup> "Only when I am in *fellowship* with my fellow men does the knowledge of God come to me individually." *Ibid.*, p. 179. Baillie's italicized emphasis.

history of God's action in and to history for the mediation of knowledge of God. For example, Baillie maintains that God can and does disclose God's Presence, for example, "in, with and under" the stories of "Abraham and Moses" to make present the historical past.<sup>410</sup> Accordingly, MI's logic maintains that immediate knowledge of the subject of Christian faith, the "Christ of Faith", is one that must be mediated by discursive and indirect knowledge about the "Christ of History".

The Christian knowledge of God is not given to any man save in conjunction with the telling of an 'old, old, story' . . .

. . . . 'For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Jesus Christ; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.' The service of others, the fellowship with others, and the historical tradition in which I stand are all media which lead me to the Mediator, and the Mediator leads me to God.<sup>411</sup>

. . . . And to this day all the history that has Presence in it for me, all the history that has anything to say to me, all of the past through which I am addressed in the present, is centered in the story of the Cross [emphasis mine].<sup>412</sup>

While it is helpful to be reminded that MI's articulation of God's "continual invasion" of history "in, with and under" includes the mediation of God's grace in and to personal histories which pre-date and post-date the cross; and to be reminded that it is Baillie's position that, inasmuch as God's logic of redemption is understood and obeyed, one is, by God's grace, able to appropriate the ontic effects of the Cross to varying degrees; the point here is not whether MI's logic successfully counters Barth's position. Rather, the point is that MI is central to Baillie's debate with a Barth whom, Baillie contends, makes knowledge of God unduly indirect, when he denies that all persons have immediate knowledge of God.

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<sup>410</sup> See *Ibid.*, p. 184.

<sup>411</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 180.

<sup>412</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 186.

### 7.3.2. *The Idea of Revelation in Recent Thought (1956)*

Returning to Baillie's thought published after *OKG*, we have found that there is no explicit mention of MI in *IRRT*. Nonetheless, the work employs language which sounds very much like the language of MI. More importantly, it advances an idea of revelation which, presupposing as it does, discloses that MI continues to be the concept to which Baillie appeals when Baillie continues to focus on the problem of the epistemological relationship between indirect and direct knowledge for knowledge of God. This is suggested somewhat when one considers the source and content of revelation; it is most readily apparent when one considers the mediation and mode of apprehension for the mediating theologian contends in his latter thought.

#### 7.3.2.1 **The source and content of revelation: the Really Real**

In *IRRT*, God is identified as the source and content of revelation. That God is the source of revelation is expressed in Baillie's remark that revelation is always divinely initiated, though always contingent upon human co-action for divine action's realization as revelation.

Revelation and salvation cannot have place unless the divine intention to reveal and to save is met by a human acceptance of revelation and salvation which is none the less a free act for all that is divinely inspired. This initiative was always with God. The first move was always His. But his second move depended, as constantly comes out in the narratives, upon the response men were enabled to make to the first.<sup>413</sup>

That revelation is fundamentally knowledge of God,<sup>414</sup> and not merely knowledge about God, is expressed, for instance, in Baillie's claim that

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<sup>413</sup> *IRRT*, p. 68.

<sup>414</sup> Baillie approvingly quotes Herrmann's claim that 'God is the revelation. All revelation is the self-revelation of God.' Wilhelm Herrmann, *Der Begriff der Offenbarung* (1887); reprinted in *Offenbarung und Wunder* (Giessen, 1908), pp. 9f, as cited in *ibid.*, pp. 33-34.

According to the Bible, what is revealed to us is not a body of information concerning various things of which we might otherwise be ignorant. If it is information at all, it is information concerning the nature and mind and purpose of God—that and nothing else. Yet in the last resort it is not information about God that is revealed, but very God Himself incarnate in Jesus Christ our Lord.<sup>415</sup>

Observation: MI, we have found, maintains the same. However, as my argument shall not draw strength from parallel thought on the source and content of revelation—these themes dominate Baillie's thought in general, and do not suggest MI's influence per se—we shall move to the context of revelation.

### **7.3.2.2 The mediation of revelation**

#### **7.3.2.2.1 Mediation “in, with and under” a sacramental universe**

In *The Idea of Revelation*, Baillie offers substantial thought on how truths, realities, and the universe mediate knowledge of God. Informative is the remark that

I see or hear aright when my seeing or hearing is determined, in every particular, by what is there to be seen or heard. The right answer to an arithmetical problem is the one which is wholly determined by the figures facing me. I think validly when my thought is completely controlled by the facts before me . . . [T]hese laws of thought are not laws of the mind in the sense that so-called natural laws are laws of nature. They do not tell us how the mind operates, but how it ought to operate. They are, therefore, laws *for* thought rather than *of* thought, laws to which mind (sic) is obliged to conform if it is to attain true knowledge . . . laws of the reality which mind is attempting to know. They are not descriptive of mind but only normative for it; what they are descriptive of is the most

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<sup>415</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 28.

general relations subsisting between the objects with which the mind is confronted.<sup>416</sup>

Baillie, then, maintains that physical reality objectively exists apart from the knower, and the knower is able to have knowledge of it; that objectively-existing laws correspond to the physical reality known, informing as they do the “relations between the objects” of the physical world; that these laws govern “valid” thought, prescribing how the mind should think; that “true knowledge” necessarily presupposes the mind’s “conforming” to these objectively-existing laws.

Observation: Baillie's critical realist epistemology in *IRRT* is no doubt anticipated the epistemological shift in *OKG*. Accordingly, *MI*'s core content historically anticipates the core content of *IRRT*'s epistemology about the mediation of knowledge of God. *MI*: humans can and do have abstracted, indirect knowledge about (truths) as well as direct knowledge of realities; knowledge of these realities—the corporeal world, oneself, other humans, and God—mediates knowledge of the Really Real, God. Indeed, *IRRT*'s epistemology presupposes the validity of *MI*'s core assertions on the mediation of revelation. The same applies to *IRRT*'s epistemology of the immediacy of revelation. As does *MI*'s epistemology<sup>417</sup>, *IRRT*'s conceives of knowledge of God as direct knowledge of the "Really Real". From an anthropological perspective, it must be this way: humans suffer an imperfect “psychosomatic organization”—a byproduct of humans' finitude<sup>418</sup>—and as such the human “receiving apparatus”<sup>419</sup> is liable to faulty knowledge “about” objects or “of” subjects.<sup>420</sup>

Consequently, human thought can neither totalize knowledge “of” the “extra mental world” of the Really Real (and other “minds”) nor provide an exhaust account of knowledge “about” the corporeal world.<sup>421</sup>

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<sup>416</sup>*Ibid.*, pp. 20-21.

<sup>417</sup> “This is what I have tried to express in the conception of mediated immediacy. In Christ we know God not by argument but by personal acquaintance. In Christ God comes to us directly.” *OKG*, pp. 196-197.

<sup>418</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 222. Cf. *IRRT*, p. 26.

<sup>419</sup> *IRRT*, p. 34. Cf. *SPG*, p. 6.

<sup>420</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 26.

<sup>421</sup> *IRRT*, 25.

Each abstract noun I apply gives you a partly wrong impression of the man at the same time that it conducts you towards a right impression . . . in all this I am but narrowing the type to which he belongs, rather than offering you the individual. . .  
 . . . . All of these considerations apply with greatly increased force to the revelation of God to the human soul. It is doubly impossible that we should give exhaustive account either of the ways by which we know God or of the God whom we know. For God is not, like my friend, merely one being among others, but is the source of all being.<sup>422</sup>

Although anthropological and epistemological constraints upon the human compromise humans' capacity to appropriate revelation, Baillie maintains, "There is nothing through which God cannot reveal Himself to me".<sup>423</sup> Nevertheless, *IRRT*'s epistemology rejects Temple's claim that 'all occurrences are in some degree revelation'. How, then, should one conceive of the corporeal world's mediation of direct knowledge of God. One should conceive of the universe as being a sacrament. This sacramental language appears in Baillie's concurrence with Sir George Adam Smith's interpretation of Plato's arguments: they, like the Eighth Psalm, 'are not arguments—they are sacraments,' that is pledges in outward and visible symbol of a personal communion already established". Hence, it is no all historical events, but only those divine-initiated events which are perceived as sacramental of the divine presence—revelation, again, is divine "action" (i.e., God's self-disclosure) *and* human co-action (i.e., the appropriation of God's self-disclosure)—which mediate knowledge of God.

Observation: Baillie's introduction of sacramental language to describe the mediation of revelation, we have found, occurs in his description of knowledge of God as a MI. MI, also like Baillie's idea of revelation, presupposes that divine action can come "in, with,

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<sup>422</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>423</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 26. Cf. p. 74.

and under" any medium<sup>424</sup> in a "sacramental" universe; and that "in, with, and under" any medium, God can be, as God is, immediately known. I have also argued, that a modified version of Stearns's sacramental modeling of MI's logic would appear to best describe MI's logic, given the forced option of modeling that logic along historical lines.

#### 7.3.2.2.2 Mediation by knowledge about history and knowledge of other minds

In *IRRT*, Baillie emphasizes that revelation is a divine-human encounter always mediated by humans' "present" situation. He also remarks that the divine-human encounter in humans' present situation entails history's being made, paradoxically, present in one's present situation.

We may ask what then becomes of all they have said about revelation being given to us in the events of past history; but the answer is that through the past God reveals Himself to me in the present. This could not be unless He had revealed Himself to others through the past while for them [the prophets] it was still present [emphasis mine].<sup>425</sup>

This insistence on the necessity of history's being made present, we have found, also appears in the context of MI's first explicit introduction in Baillie's critical thought.

Again:

*It is only in the conception of history as something that happens in the present that the apparent contradiction in our doctrine of mediated immediacy can be reasonably resolved.*<sup>426</sup>

Likewise, when in *IRRT* Baillie expounds upon history mediates revelation, he emphasizes, as does MI, the epistemological necessity of knowledge of "one's fellows" for the appropriation of divine self-disclosure.

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<sup>424</sup> *OKG*, p. 222. Cf. *IRRT*, p. 26.

<sup>425</sup> *IRRT*, p. 105.

<sup>426</sup> *OKG*, p. 189.

The Christian revelation was not addressed to a number of disparate individuals, but to a community. Only within the koinonia has it any reality . . . On the other hand, the revelation vouchsafed only to the fellowship is capable of authentication only so far as, through the fellowship, it reaches the individual; only so far as, when all are of one accord, the Holy Spirit speaks to each.<sup>427</sup>

Revelation, then, is not only mediated by knowledge of the corporeal world; it is mediated also, and "only" when, one is in fellowship with others.

Observation: MI contends: "No one of the four subjects of our knowledge—ourselves, our fellows, the corporeal world, and God—is ever presented to us except in conjunction with all three of the others." Here is additional evidence that Baillie's idea of revelation in *IRRT* subscribes to MI's epistemology, when it expounds the primary realities that mediate knowledge of God.

As revelation is mediated by knowledge of 'other selves' in one's present community, and religion is "dependent on tradition", it follows that the mediation of revelation would be mediated by knowledge about one's tradition, the minds of persons belonging to one's religious tradition, included.<sup>428</sup> In *IRRT*, Baillie maintains that Christian knowledge of God is mediated by knowledge about certain persons indigenous to the Christian tradition's historical development.

We know nothing of Christ except . . . through the Bible, all later communication of Christian knowledge being dependent upon this original record . . . There is no outside standard . . . [to] measure the adequacy of the Biblical communication . . . To persuade and assure us of its truth

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<sup>427</sup> *IRRT*, p. 108.

<sup>428</sup> In *OKG*, Baillie notes Brunner's emphasis on the mediation of knowledge of God in one's present via knowledge of others from the past, and cites Brunner with approval: 'Only in the bond which unites me to the historical fellowship of my fellow believers—to be more exact, in the fellowship of those who believed before me is my faith possible', Emil Brunner, *God and Man*, English Translation, p. 126f. Cited in *OKG*, p. 181.



we have ‘the inward work of the Holy Spirit, bearing witness by and with the word in our hearts,’ but this witness is always ‘by and with,’ never independently of, the word. As latter-day Christians we are therefore wholly dependent on the Bible for the light and truth by which we live [emphasis mine].<sup>429</sup>

Christian knowledge about God, then, must be mediated by knowledge about Jesus Christ—i.e., knowledge about the Gospel. To have knowledge about the Gospel is to have knowledge about the Christian historiography of divine action—of the “mighty acts of God”. For although the Gospel is not revelation but, not unlike John the Baptist, a “witness to the light,<sup>430</sup> it can mediate, and by Baillie’s stipulations, must mediate revelation in order for humans to have a properly Christian knowledge of God. Inasmuch as they possess a “revelatory quality”, both non-canonical “claims” to the witnessing of divine action, and “contemporary interpretations” of “God’s dealings with Israel”, can as well mediate revelation.<sup>431</sup> Still, a work’s revelatory quality must be assessed, as must Bible passages, according to its Christocentric emphasis: as Luther maintains, “the degree to which it ‘preaches Christ’ (*Christum triebt*).” This criterion is to be applied not to the “degree of inspiration, but in the purpose for which it is given”.<sup>432</sup>

Observation: MI, likewise, explicates the mediation of revelation with a Christocentric focus—a focus which would, as Fergusson notes, increasingly characterize Baillie’s thought thereafter.<sup>433</sup> Accordingly, when MI emphasizes knowledge about the Mediator for knowledge of God, it emphasizes the importance of knowledge about Christian tradition’s history—this, again, as mediated by Christian fellowship—for knowledge of God.

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<sup>429</sup> *IRRT*, p. 117.

<sup>430</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 25.

<sup>431</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 105.

<sup>432</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 117-120, *passim*.

<sup>433</sup> Fergusson, “Orthodox Liberal”, pp. 140-143.

The Christian knowledge of God is not given to any man save in conjunction with the telling of an 'old, old, story' . .

. . . . 'For there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Jesus Christ; who gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time.' The service of others, the fellowship with others, and the historical tradition in which I stand are all media which lead me to the Mediator, and the Mediator leads me to God.<sup>434</sup>

. . . . And to this day all the history that has Presence in it for me, all the history that has anything to say to me, all of the past through which I am addressed in the present, is centered in the story of the Cross.<sup>435</sup>

Observation: MI also permits the mediation of Christian knowledge of God by non-canonical works; and does so inasmuch as they are centered in the story of the cross. This, in part, is because the concept has an autobiographical basis in Baillie's life and thought: as a boy, Baillie most profound awareness of God's presence was invariably mediated by those works which *Christum triebt*.

### 7.3.2.3 The mode of revelation's apprehension: its immediacy

When in *IRRT* Baillie contends that knowledge of God is an immediate knowledge, he emphasizes the Holy Spirit's action for faith's appropriation of divine action as revelation. As concerning faith itself, Baillie states:

Our contention has been that Christian faith (*fides salvifica*) consists essentially in reliance (*fiducia*) upon the revelation of God in Christ, that this reliance [*fiducia*] necessarily presupposes an acquaintance (*notitia*) with its object and also latently contains an assent (*assensus*) to certain affirmations that can be made about that object, but that there are many variations in the degree to which this latent assent becomes patent in men's minds and these affirmations are explicitly drawn out.<sup>436</sup>

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<sup>434</sup> *OKG*, p. 180.

<sup>435</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 186.

<sup>436</sup> *IRRT*, p. 100.

The idea of faith propounded mirrors that advanced in *OKG*.<sup>437</sup> However, as it also appears in Baillie's thought before *OKG*'s publication, it cannot count as evidence for MI's influence on this facet of Baillie's idea of revelation. This is not the case, however, concerning Baillie's emphasis on the Holy Spirit's action for faith's appropriation of divine action as revelation.

Observation: With Baillie's first (overt) emphasis on MI's epistemology in *OKG* comes Baillie's increased emphasis on the Holy Spirit's action for Christian knowledge of God. This is more than a positive historical correlation; MI's ideas of immediacy, such as the immediate apprehension, appropriation, and immediate confirmation of knowledge of God, are overtly and epistemologically tied to the Holy Spirit's action in *OKG* (not the case in Baillie's earlier *MT*). This epistemological dynamic anticipates *IRRT*'s emphasis on the Holy Spirit's action for direct knowledge of God. In *IRRT*, the Holy Spirit is said to encounter one in one's present situation so as both to "illuminate" the mind's immediate apprehension of divine action and to "inspire" the appropriation of divine action as revelation. This illumination and inspiration includes, with regard specific to the Christian believer, an authentication of the Bible's witness to God's mighty events in history. In this respect, the Holy Spirit's action in the mediation of divine revelation, is not unlike The Holy Spirit's action in and to the minds of the biblical writers themselves: for only by the Holy Spirit's presence in and to their concrete situations, were the writers also able to apprehend "mighty acts" in history (past or future) as being *God's* "mighty acts".<sup>438</sup> This "illumination" and "inspiration" of the "minds" of the prophets "extended . . . to the thoughts of the writers . . . to the very words they employed in the expression of these thoughts."<sup>439</sup> According to *IRRT*'s epistemology of CRE, such illumination, apprehension and inspiration is a mediated (by knowledge about historical events and biblical language), though immediate knowledge of God.

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<sup>437</sup> See *ibid.*, Chapter 2, "Ways of Believing".

<sup>438</sup> "The Biblical writers could not have written what they did, had the Holy Spirit of God not been with them and in them as they wrote," *IRRT*, p. 34.

<sup>439</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 115.

We see, then, that Baillie epistemology in *IRRT* is one historically anticipated by MI. Evidence for this includes Baillie’s use of the language of mediation and immediacy, though more importantly Baillie’s reliance on MI’s core epistemology to describe divine action. This includes *IRRT*’s description of the now emphasized historical context that mediates God’s mighty acts: God’s action occurs “in, with and under” a sacramental universe whose many media (self, others, the world) mediate knowledge of God, and point to the logical center of history, Jesus Christ. All revelation, Christian or otherwise, is apprehended and appropriated as immediate knowledge of God.

### **7.3.3. *The Sense of the Presence of God* (1962)**

We have found in the diachronic trace, with Newlands, that “Baillie’s concern throughout *The Sense of the Presence of God* is to chart the relationship between faith and reason, between philosophy and theology.”<sup>440</sup> With regard to *SPG*, the trace has also produced substantial evidence that Baillie’s MT finishes his Christian apologetic agenda with a focus on MTPP and recourse to MI to defend his epistemological perspective.

#### **7.3.3.1 The sense of God’s presence: mediated by three knowledges**

In *SPG*, Baillie maintains, as does he explicitly in *OKG* and his early MT, that reality is a gradated valuational field known from the revelation of divine perfection:

It cannot indeed be too strongly emphasized that God’s revelation of Himself cannot be received by us save in the context of our knowledge of finite realities. Only a being who is (a) self-conscious, (b) aware of other selves, and (c) aware of corporeal things can have knowledge of God.<sup>441</sup>

Observation: This is a restatement of MI’s epistemology:

I believe the view capable of defence that no one of the subjects of our knowledge—ourselves, our fellows, the

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<sup>440</sup> Newlands, “The Sense of the Presence of God”, p. 162.

<sup>441</sup> *SPG*, p. 117.

corporeal world, and God—is ever presented to us except in conjunction with all three of the others.<sup>442</sup>

Accordingly, Baillie uses MI to argue that reality is a gradated valuational field—the very field denied by Russell's restrictions on what can knowledge by direct acquaintance.

### 7.3.3.2 The sense of God's presence: underwritten by MI

We have found that Baillie's criticism of Russell focuses upon Russell's concept of knowledge by acquaintance. Russell contends that knowledge about sensory data from the corporeal world (“created” reality or “proximate reality”) is the terminus of knowledge of ultimate reality. Baillie argues that to deny knowledge by acquaintance of the “extra-mental world” of the “Really Real” (“uncreated reality” and “ultimate reality”) is (a) to depersonalize the “Really Real” as the source and possibility of empirical knowledge; (b) to depersonalize humans, through the demotion of each to a “half-man”—as if humans “know nothing but analysis”;<sup>443</sup> (c) to depersonalize the universe in which humans should “feel at home”; (d) to undermine humans' “certitude” of the personal quality of reality—of relations between the self, other humans, and the corporeal world. This epistemology results in Russell's ontological reduction of persons to “half-men”, according to Baillie. “

Observation: MI's epistemology maintains that “knowledge by acquaintance” is direct acquaintance with those realities denied by Russell's epistemology (“knowledge by acquaintance”): God, ourselves, others and the universe. Baillie puts it this way in *OKG*:

This is what I have tried to express in the conception of a mediated immediacy. In Christ we know God not by argument but by personal acquaintance. In Christ God comes to us directly .<sup>444</sup>

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<sup>442</sup> *OKG*, p. 178.

<sup>443</sup> “‘Reverence, love and devout humility’ are qualities more necessary to wholeness of outlook than ‘decisive scientific clearness’. They engage us, and enable us to meet on a far deeper level. At all events, it is with the half-men who know nothing but analysis, and leave us with nothing but the reductive naturalism in which it issues, that my present argument has been concerned . . .” *SPG*, p. 254.

<sup>444</sup> *OKG*, pp. 196-197.

Accordingly, Baillie maintains in *SPG* that it is better to conceive of the universe as one about which we have a mediated knowledge (empirical knowledge, included) that mediates immediate knowledge of the extra mental world of realities. Baillie expresses it this way, in his final work:

Thought implies a ratiocinative process which makes use of the apparatus of inference. But it must not be supposed that what is here called 'immediate knowledge' [of God] is merely sensation, the reception of the organism of sense-data. It too is a product of intelligence, though not yet of reflection. . . the work of *nous*; but of the *nous aisthetikos*, not of the *nous apodeiktikos* (or, in the Latin equivalents . . . of the *ratio intuitiva*, not of the *ratio discursiva*). When such knowledge is said to be immediate, what is meant is that it is not mediated by any process of inference. It is . . . a direct knowledge of the real, extra mental world. It is indeed mediated by sense-data, but it is not one of logical entailment [emphasis mine].<sup>445</sup>

Observation: MI's epistemology contends for all of SPG's epistemology crystallized in the above passage.

When Baillie argues against Flew, he contends for such mediated-immediate knowledge. The language of a "sense" of God's presence, argues Baillie, is meaningful; and the knowledge apprehended with this sense—a direct (though, indirect) knowledge—is, in Baillie's response to Flew's falsification challenge, presumed: faith's denial of God's existence would occur only if this mode of apprehension—an immediate, "single illumination" and "sense of the presence of God"—failed. What would be a sign of its failure? It would be a situation in which "we were no longer able to discover *any* such meaning in *any* events but came to regard the whole of our experience and everything as that has ever happened as meaningful jumble."<sup>446</sup> Essentially, then, faith's obliteration

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<sup>445</sup> *SPG*, pp. 51-52. This is Baillie's interpretation of MacMurray's concept of mediated immediacy—one with which he is in accord here.

<sup>446</sup> See *ibid.*, pp. 72-73.

would require a perspective of the universe not unlike that for which Russell's empirical reductionism contends: a universe devoid of purposive value, personalities, and psychological certitude.

Baillie's explicit restatement of knowledge of God as MI in SPG evidences that Baillie still conceives of knowledge of God as MI. Baillie's reliance on MI's epistemology in his arguments against Russell's "knowledge by acquaintance" and Flew's falsification challenge in SPG evidences that MI remained important for Baillie's latter MT, Baillie's last major work included.

#### **7.4. CONCLUSIONS ON BAILLIE'S LATTER MEDIATING THEOLOGY**

My conclusion on Baillie's thought is twofold: (1) the most important problem for Baillie's latter MT is MTPP; (2) MI is important for Baillie's latter MT's position on MTPP. My support for these conclusions derives from the diachronic and my observations of it.

##### **7.4.1. Baillie's Latter MT: Its Apology's Focus**

We have found evidence that (1) MTPP is the most important problem for Baillie's latter MT, in Baillie's arguments in his most important latter apologetic works. In *OKG*, Baillie argues that both neo-orthodox theology (i.e. Barth, Brunner) and the rationalist legacy (e.g. Aquinas, Anselm, Descartes) have failed to adequately account for God's immanent Presence "in, with and under" creation. Baillie's point of attack: each position evidences a faulty conceptualization of the epistemological relationship between indirect (mediated) and direct (immediate) knowledge of God. Barth "unduly [simplifies] the spiritual situation of the modern West" with his "denial that there is any implicit knowledge which could serve as a starting-point for argument."<sup>447</sup> However, the West knows the God whom it rejects, maintains Baillie, as all persons have immediate knowledge of God. Baillie's arguments against the rationalist theory of religion (Anselm, Aquinas, Descartes) also focuses upon the issue of the epistemological relationship between direct (immediate) and direct knowledge for knowledge of God. This theory makes knowledge "of" God excessively indirect—derived by discursive reasoning.

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<sup>447</sup> *OKG*, note #1, p. 15.

However, God's existence cannot be established by invariably indirect knowledge; it is established only by direct knowledge of God. Aquinas rightly insists that ours is sacramental universe, and that sensory data (*contra* Descartes and Anselm) mediate knowledge about God's effects; however, knowledge of God entails a personal encounter with God "in, with and under" the sacramental universe; that is, to know something of the nature of Personality.<sup>448</sup> Aquinas rejects the possibility that nature mediates direct knowledge of Personality, in favor of direct knowledge of God's effects. This epistemology depersonalizes God, however, by making God an Inference. Moreover, it does not correspond with the experience of humankind: God is a direct knowledge of Personality as disclosed in and to moral consciousness, not an knowledge indirectly established by discursive reasoning—an inference. Anselm's thought rightly recognizes the intuitive element for knowledge of God; however, it falls into the rationalist trap of thinking that knowledge of God can be logically demonstrated. However,

*No* proof of God's existence can help us to understand our faith in Him, or can in the last resort do anything but hinder such understanding, *if* it be true that it is not by a process of inference that our faith has actually been reached . . . It is not as the result of an inference of any kind, whether explicit or implicit, whether laboriously excogitated or swiftly intuited, that the knowledge of God's reality comes to us. It comes rather through our direct [emphasis mine] personal encounter with Him in the Person of Jesus Christ His Son our Lord.<sup>449</sup>

Both neo-orthodoxy and rationalism also advance problematic thought on the mediation of knowledge of God, in that each makes knowledge of God contingent upon discursive knowledge. Barth maintains that knowledge of God must be mediated by knowledge about Jesus Christ; Aquinas's natural theology in effect makes knowledge of God mediated by knowledge about Aristotle. Baillie agrees that knowledge of God is

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<sup>448</sup> "Not the communication of propositions but the communion of spirits is the last word about divine revelation." John Baillie, *The Place of Jesus Christ in Modern Christianity* (Edinburgh, 1929), pp. 113-114.

<sup>449</sup> *OKG*, p. 143. Baillie's italicized emphasis.



mediated by indirect or second-order knowledge “about” God and other realities; however, God is immediately known “in, with and under” the entire range of human experience, whether one have knowledge about Jesus Christ or knowledge about metaphysical speculation. Furthermore, each theory's doctrine of the knowledge of God presupposes a clear line between God’s grace and fallen human nature. However, no clear line of demarcation exists between these self-same facts of human experience. Better to contend, Baillie argues, that God’s grace is manifest in God's gracious provision of a direct knowledge of Personality to all persons.

Baillie's arguments against Farrer and Temple in *IRRT* evidence his continued concern with the problem of the epistemological relationship between direct knowledge and indirect knowledge for knowledge of God. When Farrer maintains that divine truth comes in the form of images, his is an “exaggeration of the distinctness” between imagination and the intellect. Baillie argues that there is inadequate reason to think “whereas all propositional knowledge’s apprehension of truth contains an element of possible error, the images are given directly by God and contain no such element.”<sup>450</sup> For example: “It is difficult to know why we should suppose that [images] are directly the medium of revelation in a sense in which [propositional truths] are not”. Moreover, the emphasis on direct images as the medium for knowledge of God, over direct knowledge of God, undermines the communal element of revelation. Temple's thought on the mediation of revelation—particularly that of an “impersonal” nature—also marginalizes the direct knowledge of Personality that is revelation. Temple correctly conceives of the material order as a testimony to God's self-disclosure; however, it is a Self who is directly disclosed “in, with and under” the medium of nature.

When, in *SPG*, Baillie argues against Russell’s logical empiricism, the focus remains on the problem of the epistemological relationship between direct and indirect knowledge for knowledge of God. The focus is on Russell's thought about what can be directly known. Russell limits knowledge of realities by acquaintance to knowledge of sense data, objects of memory, internal states, and ourselves. Accordingly, he maintains that “apart from ‘universals’, knowledge by acquaintance is only with sense-data and not with real objects or with real subjects”. To make the terminus of direct knowledge

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<sup>450</sup> *IRRT*, p. 38.

sensory data about the corporeal world (“created” reality or “proximate reality”) or a universal, and as such to deny immediate knowledge of the “extra-mental world” of the “Really Real” (“uncreated reality” and “ultimate reality”) is to incur difficulty—namely, to depersonalize human relations; to depersonalize the universe; and, to deny the ground, and hence, the possibility, of knowledge by direct acquaintance, be it empirical-scientific or otherwise: God is the ground for direct knowledge “of” lesser “realities” (e.g., the material world, other humans, oneself) as well as for indirect knowledge “about” truths, including those abstracted by the logical empiricist. “The world we know is known by us as one world”<sup>451</sup>—this because humans have: a knowledge of God by acquaintance that is logically prior to all other knowledges (i.e., scientific knowledge); a knowledge which, given contemporaneously with knowledge of lesser realities, informs our knowledge of the universe: we are, Baillie contends, “self-conscious”, “aware of other selves”, and “aware of corporeal things”—this because of our knowledge of God by direct acquaintance. To limit humans’ direct knowledge to knowledge about sense data is to turn the human into a “half-man”—one whom, having no direct knowledge of humans, God, and the moral basis of reality, can “know nothing but analysis”.<sup>452</sup> Such a half-man is, to the ordinary person, an alien—both as a reality and as a concept: the ordinary person has an abiding “sense of God’s presence” which pulsates with the “psychological certitude” of the existence of personalities, Personalities, and feels “at home in the universe”. Russell’s “knowledge by acquaintance” thus incorrectly confines direct knowledge of the Really Real to knowledge empirically verified through inferential abstraction upon immediately known sensory data. Rather, one should speak of humans as having knowledge of God by acquaintance through a sense of God’s presence. Meaningful language, it also draws strength from ordinary experience, particularly the ordinary use of the language of sense. That such direct knowledge of God is in theory falsifiable also counts against Flew’s falsification challenge.

Baillie’s apologetic focus, his criticism’s quality, and his response to that criticism in his latter MT evidence that MI is important for Baillie’s latter MT.

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<sup>451</sup> *SPG*, pp. 50-51.

<sup>452</sup> “‘Reverence, love and devout humility’ are qualities more necessary to wholeness of outlook than ‘decisive scientific clearness’. They engage us, and enable us to meet on a far deeper level. At all events, it is with the half-men who know nothing but analysis, and leave us with nothing but the reductive naturalism in which it issues, that my present argument has been concerned . . .” *Ibid.*, p. 254.

#### **7.4.2. Baillie's Latter MT: MI's Presence**

As ground for my second conclusion, (2) MI is important for Baillie's latter MT's apologetic position on MTPP, I offer those "observations" that I have made in this chapter's revisit of Baillie's latter theology.

### **7.5. MI'S IMPORTANCE FOR BAILLIE'S EARLY LIFE AND FORMAL EDUCATION**

As we near the final conclusion on the issue of MI's importance for Baillie's MT as a whole, I wish to return briefly to Baillie's memory of his childhood and early-adulthood experiences, as Baillie's thought on the matter has implications for our evaluation of MI's importance.

#### **7.5.1. The Mediation of Baillie's Childhood Knowledge of God.**

Most central to MI's epistemology is the claim "that no one of the subjects of our knowledge—ourselves, our fellows, the corporeal world, and God—is ever presented to us except in conjunction with all three of the others."<sup>453</sup> These knowledges can lead persons to knowledge of Jesus Christ (if mediated by knowledge about Jesus Christ) by direct acquaintance, The Mediator who mediates a deeper knowledge or awareness of God.

When we compare Baillie's autobiography of his early childhood, which describes Baillie's childhood knowledge of God as a MI, with MI's conceptual architecture, we find several conceptual parallels between the two. This, I shall maintain, too suggests that Baillie was formulating, if perhaps naively and somewhat crudely, a concept of MI well before the publication of *OKG*.

##### **7.5.1.1 Mediation by knowledge of others and knowledge about Jesus**

MI contends that knowledge of God is always mediated by human relations—by knowledge of other persons, as minds, by personal acquaintance. Baillie, likewise,

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<sup>453</sup> *OKG*, p. 178.

relates that his childhood knowledge of God was one mediated by relationships—by the thought and deed of his parents, for instance. As he puts it:

I was born into a Christian home, and God's earliest disclosure of His reality to my infant soul was mediated to me by the words and deeds of my parents.<sup>454</sup>

Were those “ words” which “mediated” God's Presence to Baillie's infant soul, words about the Christian faith? Baillie has been found to suggest that they were: somewhat confused about the language of the *Westminster Shorter Catechism*, Baillie got the basic point of the lesson, nevertheless: for he states that he “grew up understanding and believing that only in the everlasting enjoyment of God's presence could my life ever reach its proper and divinely appointed fulfillment.” In the following excerpt, Baillie illuminates how his parents' Bible and Bible-related language mediated to him his infant awareness of God's Presence. He also identifies other factors involved in what he remembers to be the mediation of his knowledge of God.

I cannot remember a time a time when I did not know that my parents and their household were part of a wider community which was under the same single authority [God]. Nor again, can I recall a time when I did not know that this authority was bound up with, and indeed seemed to emanate from, *a certain story*. As far back as I can remember anything, my parents and my nurses were already speaking to me of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, of Moses and David, of God's covenant with the Israelites and of their journey through the wilderness, of the culmination of the story in the coming of Jesus Christ, God's only Son, whom he sent to earth to suffer and die for our salvation; and then of the apostles and martyrs and saints and “Scots Worthies” whose golden deeds brought the story down to very recent days. And I knew that the story somehow was the source of the authority with which I was confronted. I

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<sup>454</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

could not hear a Bible story read without being aware that in it I was somehow being confronted with a solemn presence that had in it both sweetness and rebuke. Nor do I remember a day when I did not already dimly know that this presence was God.

It was, then, through the media of my boyhood home, the Christian community of which it formed a part, and the “old, old, story” from which that community drew its life, that God first revealed himself to me. This is a simple matter of fact. But what I take to be a matter of fact in it is not only that God used these media but that in using them He actually did reveal Himself to *my* soul.

For what I seemed to know was not merely that God had declared his will to my parents and that they in their turn had declared their will to me, but also through my parents God had declared his will to me... [W]hat gave the [Bible] story its power over my mind and imagination and conscience was the knowledge that ‘in, with and under’ this speaking to these others of long ago He was now speaking to myself.<sup>455</sup>

Baillie relates that God’s revelation to his “soul” was mediated by his knowledge of his parents—by the “media” of his parents’ deeds and “in, with and under” their Bible-centered language. Similarly, Baillie suggests that his knowledge of God was mediated by his knowledge about Church doctrine (e.g., the “strong evangelical note” which turned his mind often to “the necessity of regeneration”). Elsewhere, he discloses that certain non-biblical stories of his youth mediated the “same Presence as met [him] in the Bible”—inasmuch as its language was “somehow of a piece with the Bible stories.”<sup>456</sup>

Baillie, similarly, relates how relationships were important in the mediation of knowledge of God—it was his fellowship with his “Church community” that God “first revealed himself to me”. This emphasis on church relations for the mediation of knowledge of God is consistent with Baillie’s remark that it was his joint partaking of the Lord’s Supper which, in particular, mediated to him a profound awareness of God’s Presence.

The media which mediated Baillie’s earliest awareness of God’s presence mirror MI’s conceptualization of the mediation of Christian knowledge of God; that knowledge

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<sup>455</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 183-184.

<sup>456</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 186.

of God is always mediated by knowledge of others, knowledge about the history of the Christian tradition, and knowledge about the Gospel of Jesus Christ. Baillie's emphasis on what is presumed to be childhood relationships characterized by *koinonia* also reflect MI's position that Christian knowledge of God is mediated by *agapē*.

### 7.5.1.2 Mediation by knowledge of the universe

Baillie's autobiographical account of his childhood knowledge of God does not emphasize the universe's mediation of that knowledge. Baillie does, however, use sacramental language—"in, with, and under"—to describe how his parents' Bible-centered language mediated to him knowledge of God: "What gave the [Bible] story its power over my mind and imagination and conscience was the knowledge that 'in, with and under' this speaking to these others of long ago He was now speaking to myself." Presumably, it was not the language of "in, with and under" to which Baillie was routinely exposed as a child, given his Airlock church's being Calvinistic theological in orientation; however, that he does use this particular sacramental language to describe his childhood knowledge of God does provide some support for my position that MI's idea of mediation has a basis in Baillie's thought about his childhood knowledge of God: MI describes knowledge of God as being mediated "in, with and under" our knowledge of a "sacramental universe".

### 7.5.1.3 Mediation by self-knowledge

As little can I reach a day when I was conscious of myself  
but not of God as I can reach a day when I was conscious  
of myself but not of other human beings.<sup>457</sup>

Here, Baillie restates that his knowledge of God was mediated by his parents' deeds. This remark reflects MI's position that knowledge of God is knowledge always mediated by knowledge of oneself and others.

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<sup>457</sup> *Ibid.*, p.5.

### 7.5.2. The Immediacy of Baillie's Childhood Knowledge of God

MI's logic presupposes that a knowledge of God is an immediate knowledge—a direct knowledge of God “in, with and under” our “knowledge of others” in a “sacramental universe”—and that immediate knowledge of God is more directly present in and to our souls than our knowledge of other persons.<sup>458</sup>

When Baillie describes his childhood awareness of God, he does not say that his knowledge of God was an “immediate” knowledge. However, it is clear that he does not reduce this knowledge to an inferential, propositional, or discursive knowledge. Rather, he describes his childhood knowledge of God's presence with the language of his being “somehow aware”—somehow having “a recognition, as vague and articulate as [one] will” of the “divine factor”.

My earliest memories have a definitely religious atmosphere. They contain as part of their substance a recognition, as vague and articulate as you will, yet quite unmistakable for anything else, of what I have now learned to call the divine as a factor in my life. I cannot remember a time when I did not already feel, in some dim way, that I was ‘not my own’ to do with as I pleased, but was claimed by a higher power not my own . . . For, as far back as I can remember anything, I was somehow aware that my parents lived under the same kind of authority as that which, through them, was communicated to me. I can see that my parents too behaved as though they, *even they*, were not their own . . .<sup>459</sup>

Similarly, the Gospel “somehow was the source of the authority with which [he] was confronted.” When Baillie uses this somewhat vague language to describe his childhood “awareness” of God's presence to his “soul”, he is referring to the immediacy of knowledge of God—the central tenant of MI for which Baillie contends throughout *OKG*.

Baillie's reflection on his childhood knowledge of God suggests, then, that MI has a very strong autobiographical basis.

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<sup>458</sup> See *ibid.*, pp. 238-239.

<sup>459</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

## 7.6. CONCLUSION ON MAJOR RESEARCH ISSUE #2: MI'S IMPORTANCE FOR BAILLIE'S MEDIATING THEOLOGY

The prevalent position on MI's importance for Baillie's critical thought has been that MI is "an important feature"<sup>460</sup> of *OKG*—that MI is (1) but one important concept (2) for Baillie's apologetic (3) at one phase in its development—in Baillie's *OKG* (1939). As over against this position, I conclude that, inasmuch as Baillie's MT is a Christian apologetic, MI is (1) *the most* important concept (2) for Baillie's *critical MT as a whole* (3) *throughout* its development (1926-1960).

Ground for my conclusion derives largely from my diachronic trace of the development of Baillie's MT (Chapters 3-5). That trace reveals that Baillie's MT is primarily concerned with this problem:

The epistemological relationship between indirect (mediated) knowledge and direct (immediate) knowledge for knowledge of God. [MTPP]

This is a more precise interpretation of the focus of Baillie's MT than has been provided in previous Baillie research: it has observed that Baillie's MT evidences a sustained interest was in the problems of knowledge of God and revelation, in general. As such, it stands as a plausible contribution to the research.

My diachronic trace's tracking of the development of Baillie's apologetic focus on MTPP has thrown into a bolder relief MI's importance for Baillie's MT:

MI is Baillie's proposed solution to the problem upon which he focused throughout his roughly thirty-five-year academic career: MTPP.

When I maintain that MI is Baillie's proposed solution to the problem which occupied his academic career, I also rely on ground which, when translated, constitutes a major finding in the research on John Baillie's thought:

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<sup>460</sup> James Brown, "John Baillie" (pp. 17-29), p. 23. In *Theologians of our Time*, A.W. Hastings and E. Hastings, eds., Edinburgh, T&T Clark, 1966.



In Baillie's early MT, we see a nascent version of MI.

As primary support for this novel interpretation, I have thoroughly documented a Baillie whose early apologetic repeatedly argues that knowledge of God is an indirectly direct knowledge—this as within the context of an exposition of Baillie's debate with several theological and philosophical positions on the issue of the indirectness and directness of knowledge of God. That Baillie's early thought would contend that knowledge of God is indirectly direct (mediated and immediate) is not entirely surprising, given that we have also found Baillie describing his childhood experience of God as a mediated immediacy: given Baillie's more words on the impact of his childhood experience, it seems reasonable to think that the mediating theologian would have entertained a concept similar to MI before his publication of *OKG* in 1939 at about the age of 53 years. Likewise, it is not unreasonable to think that Baillie would employ MI in works penned after *OKG*, as research has suggested.<sup>461</sup> save that Baillie's latter (and early) MT gravitates toward the problems with which MI's epistemology is conceptually integrated, Baillie's ideas of knowledge of God and revelation,<sup>462</sup> one should think Baillie not inclined to jettison possibly his "most original contribution" to the doctrine of the knowledge<sup>463</sup> after the publication of *OKG*, but to exploit his contribution for apologetic gain. We have found that he does, if also not without difficulties.

My ground for MI's central importance for Baillie's MT also rests in part on my contention that there is continuity in Baillie's epistemology across its development—this despite, for example, the latter Baillie's increased Christocentrism and, from about the mid 1930's until Baillie's death, the latter Baillie's increased emphasis on God's transcendence. Here too the previous research has suggested the feasibility of such ground. In particular, I have in mind a remark from Heron, who suggests that mediated immediacy both conceptually and diachronically connects Baillie's early thought, whose emphasis is on the immediacy of God in general revelation, with Baillie's latter thought, whose emphasis is on mediation of God in special revelation:

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<sup>461</sup> See Fergusson, "Orthodox Liberal", p. 149 and Newlands, "The Sense of the Presence of God", p.155.

<sup>462</sup> Klinefelter, "Our Knowledge of God", p. 409.

<sup>463</sup> Fergusson, *Selected Writings*, p. 3.

In *Our Knowledge of God* (1939) he put a much stronger emphasis on the otherness and transcendence of God... Alongside the new emphasis, he still wished to preserve a general revelation of God in all religion, and a direct awareness of him in the human heart, even though it might not be a conscious or reasoned awareness. This immediate awareness he saw as brought out into the open by external mediation—through the world around us, through other people and most of all through the impact of Jesus himself. The result is what he liked to call a ‘mediated immediacy’ in our knowledge of God [emphasis mine].<sup>464</sup>

As support for what one might call the epistemological organicity of Baillie’s mediating theological development, I have documented conceptual parallels between Baillie’s concept of universal revelation and mediated immediacy’s description of a specifically Christian revelation. For one, we have found that each maintains that revelation is a process always mediated-immediate knowledge. We have also found Baillie attempting to forge an epistemological connection between the immediacy of faith in Jesus Christ, and the immediacy of universal knowledge of God found in humans’ moral consciousness of value: from start to finish, Baillie’s MT maintains that revelation, be it universal, Christian or otherwise, is always mediated by our moral consciousness of value. Likewise, we have found that Baillie’s MT contends that other-oriented love is the highest value of moral consciousness. Accordingly, we have found that when MI’s description of Christian revelation centers upon how the Mediator mediates the Christian faith’s more profound, immediate knowledge of God, it too emphasizes the importance of moral value—*agapē*—for the mediation of faith in Jesus Christ—and this despite, as Fergusson has rightly observed, the latter mediating theologian’s jettisoning, relatively speaking, of both a theology contextualized in largely Kantian terms and a method marked quasi-phenomenological in its approach to religious experience.

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<sup>464</sup> Alisdair I. C. Heron. *A Century of Protestant Theology*. Guildford: Lutterworth Press, 1980, p. 124.

In passing, although I have maintained that revelation is always a mediated-immediate knowledge of God in Baillie's thought; and, by extension, have also employed this element of Baillie's thought as additional ground for MI's importance; I would not be interpreted as maintaining to that MI is a self-contained description of universal knowledge of God. For one, although Baillie's early MT is assuredly not as overtly Christocentric Baillie's latter MT, Baillie does tie his concept of "Christ" specifically to "Jesus Christ",<sup>465</sup> thereby denying that all humans have knowledge about God's action in Jesus Christ. As such, I do not interpret Baillie, at any stage, as contending for a Christ known universally, which is to say, known by all persons. Likewise, MI contends for faith in Jesus Christ and not, for example, for something along the line of a universal Christ consciousness. Consequently, while Baillie does espouse a universalist concept of salvation that admits of varying degrees; and maintains that saving knowledge of God is, regardless of how one encounters God and lives a life of faith in God, invariably a mediated-immediate knowledge in Baillie's thought; when MI describes knowledge of God as mediated specifically by the Mediator, Jesus Christ, its squarely Jesus-Christocentrism effectively rules it out MI as a self-contained model of universal knowledge of God.

That said, it is clear that MI is important for Baillie's thought on divine action, revelation and religious experience (see Chapter 2); and that Baillie would have MI's epistemology integrate his ideas of special and universal revelation. As such, MI is also essential to the epistemological undergirding that underwrites Baillie's soft pluralist theology—one that advances a Universalist doctrine of the atonement. Although it remains to be seen if MI's logic is successful at such integration, here is additional support for my claim that MI is the most important concept for Baillie's MT.<sup>466</sup>

This leaves us with the third and final research issue, MI's importance for contemporary Christian thought.

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<sup>465</sup> See *IOR*, p. 467

<sup>466</sup> This is to say nothing about MI's plausible importance for Baillie's dialogue with other thinkers in the university setting: McIntyre notes Baillie's preoccupation with "theology's compresence in the University with other disciplines" and ties it to Baillie's belief in the "mediated immediacy" of "God's presence in, with, and under culture." "New College Bulletin", September 1983,

*“Dr. Baillie is, indeed, a singularly independent thinker, and both those who read him now, and those who will be in the position someday to assess the value of his work as a Christian theologian, must not expect to follow his expositions as though he were taking them along familiar routes.”<sup>467</sup>*

## **8. MI: A CONTRIBUTION TO CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIAN THOUGHT**

We have found the scholarly criticism of MI to be overwhelmingly negative and to center primarily upon MI’s logic. Criticism which supports academic theology’s claim that MI is not a contribution to contemporary Christian thought, this negative criticism of MI, in turn, adds credence to historians’ and Baillie researchers’ also present claim that Baillie’s MT does have a concept with value for contemporary Christian thought. In this chapter, I will challenge those widely held claims, by arguing that one of MI’s four functions—MI’s description of CRE—is a promising contribution to contemporary Christian thought.

### **8.1. EVALUATING MI’S LOGIC: METHODOLOGY CONSIDERATIONS**

We begin with the fundamental issue of the criteria required for MI’s evaluation. When evaluating MI, we must keep in mind the following.

- (1) The function of MI under examination. This thesis indicates that MI has four functions, and not merely two functions (a description of revelation; an argument for knowledge of God), as prior research has often supposed. One of MI’s four functions is a normative epistemology—an argument for the reasonableness of the claim that humans can have knowledge of God. Three of MI’s functions are descriptive epistemologies—descriptions of the *processes* involved divine action, revelation and religious experience.

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<sup>467</sup> John Kenneth Mozley, *Some Tendencies in British Theology* (London: S.P.C.K., 1951), p. 149.

(2) MI's ground. Although MI's epistemology is ultimately grounded in divine revelation, when Baillie argues for MI he takes a typically empirical and somewhat multi-disciplinary approach in his attempt to substantiate each of MI's four functions. Specifically, Baillie attempts to ground MI in: (a) social-scientific (psychology, sociology, history) interpretations of how humans, in general, come to know the world, the self, and each other;<sup>468</sup> (b) an autobiographical account of his own experience of God—"in, with and under" which he has found knowledge of God (revelation) to be a mediated immediacy (see Chapter 7). Baillie, in turn, (c) often seeks to correlate (a-b), which amount to an empirical epistemological basis for the reasonableness of knowledge of god as MI, with a doctrine of the knowledge of God, the ultimately theological-epistemological basis of which is faith's veridical immediate of God (i.e., revelation-as-MI). Baillie's attempt to ground MI in a positive correlation—one between his theological epistemology of revelation and his social-scientific account of religious experience—reflects the correlative theological method feature by Baillie's MT in general.

(3) Theological dismissals of MI. We have found empirical, neo-Orthodox and Christian evangelical theologians criticizing MI, on the ground that MI fails to square with the theology of their respective Christian groups.

Here, I wish to entertain (3) and to raise this question: Is MI's seeming conflict with any one theological epistemology adequate ground for evaluating MI's promise for contemporary Christian thought? I do not think so. For one, the leading Baillie research makes plain that an evaluation of Baillie's MT will also consider the implications of philosophical perspectives. We recall, for example, Newlands's observation that

Debates between realists and anti-realists have reached levels of sophistication unknown to Baillie . . . No doubt Baillie would have been a keen observer of these debates and would have drawn the implications for his theology.<sup>469</sup>

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<sup>468</sup> Though it is the case that Baillie views the Bible as being a historical record of religious experience.

<sup>469</sup> Newlands, "The Sense of the Presence of God", p. 161.

Baillie, of course, is not here to draw those implications; however, we are in the position to bring these and similar philosophical advances to bear on an evaluation on MI's epistemology. Accordingly, Fergusson appeals to the philosophers Anscombe and MacIntyre as support for his claim that "any attempt [such as Baillie's] to generate a system of belief from our deepest moral intuitions is fundamentally misguided." Indeed, these philosophers' perspectives are "deeply problematic for Baillie's apologetic strategy."<sup>470</sup> Of course, they are not possibly problematic, if one does not think them relevant to a critique of Baillie's thought, in the first place.

Baillie's thought does itself testify to the need to evaluate it from a philosophical perspective. For one, Baillie's ambitious MT often engages, as we have found at several turns, philosophical thought.<sup>471</sup> Accordingly, Baillie specifically relates MI's logic of immediate knowledge of God to a variety of sources, not all of which are strictly theological in orientation. This includes, for example, Baillie's consideration of MI's epistemology in light of: (1) doctrine derived from Baillie's Protestant church heritage (e.g., *Westminster Confession of Faith*); (2) empirical data concerning "religious" and "non-religious" experience; (3) Christian and non-Christian religious traditions; (4) various fields and disciplines—psychology, philosophy of language, philosophy of mind, ethics, philosophy of psychology, for instance; and, even, (5) the unconscious mind. Baillie's overtly multi-disciplinary use of MI's epistemology is in accordance with MI's four primary functions, each of which weighs in on God's presence "in, with and under" each of the above loci (1-5). It is thus clear that MI's logic must be evaluated from multiple perspectives; and one need not consider, as additional support, Baillie's employment of the nascent form of MI in his early MT's engagement with manifold theological, philosophical and psychological theories.

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<sup>470</sup> "Orthodox Liberal", p. 135.

<sup>471</sup> We recall, for instance, Klinefelter's remark that "John Baillie both temperamentally and professionally served as a mediator and interpreter among competing Continental, British, and American theologies; between naturalism and supernaturalism; reason and revelation; science and history; empiricism and rationalism; theology and philosophy; morality and religion; orthodoxy and liberalism; liberalism and neo-orthodoxy, neo-orthodoxy and Post-Barthian liberalism; and finally, between the several Christian and non-Christian communions." Donald S. Klinefelter, "The Theology of John Baillie", p. 434.

This is not to say that MI should be immune to criticism from any one theology. There is, for instance, a place for confessionalist-theological rejections of theological and philosophical concepts, as Ward<sup>472</sup> indicates. Moreover, when the claim to immediate knowledge of God is sheltered from theological criticism, such “protective strategies” invariably compromise our understanding of the epistemology of religious experience.<sup>473</sup> I would not have that. Neither am I suggesting that an evaluation of MI’s logic should place the onus on Baillie’s critics—that they should prove MI’s logic is self-contradictory; clearly, that onus is on Baillie.<sup>474</sup> Nonetheless, I reject as wholly inadequate that tendency which we have witnessed in the research: to deride MI’s promise for Christian thought, on the ground that its logic fails to promote the dogma of any one Christian group. A theological-evaluatory method whose non-construct validity has repeatedly failed to address adequately, let alone to assess fully, MI’s multi-faceted complexity and conceptual richness; a method whose unduly narrow perspective has impeded our understanding of MI’s meaning—this, as evidence in its proponent’s shared eisegetical inclination to interpret, to evaluate and to dismiss MI’s logic, according to a rather truncated interpretation of MI’s functionality (two functions, as opposed to four) — here are the fruits of this approach. It will not suffice for the judicious evaluation of MI’s logic, including that logic’s present promise for Christian thought.

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<sup>472</sup> *Religion and Revelation*, pp. 36-42.

<sup>473</sup> See Proudfoot, *Religious Experience*.

<sup>474</sup> Indeed, let us go against much of our understanding of MI’s logic (Chapter 6), and presume that D.C. Macintosh rightly maintains that MI’s logic evidences that Baillie is being unduly dogmatic, whereas Macintosh’s empirical-theological hands, unlike Baillie’s “dualist hands”, have abated the perennial issue of mind-body dualism. Let us also presume that D.W. Torrance rightly contends that MI evidences Baillie’s poor “theological understanding” when it allegedly “separates faith from knowledge”, whereas Torrance’s Barthian tradition contrarily evidences a quite solid “theological understanding” of the epistemological connection between “faith and knowledge” when, unlike MI’s epistemology, it epistemologically separates Christian faith in God from a knowledge of God denied to all humans, when it severs an ontological connection between unregenerate humans and God. Let us allow further still that Henry rightly maintains that Baillie’s epistemology of immediacy denies “epistemic access” to “objective reality” when it allegedly denies revelation’s “cognitive content”, where as Henry’s epistemology champions humankind’s epistemic access to God, when it denies that all humans have knowledge of an objectively-existing God—it is certainly the case that said onus rests upon on Baillie’s thought, as: (1) MI is a relatively obscure concept in the literature; (2) MI’s logic is indeed, by inspection, seemingly self-contradictory; (3) MI’s critics, such as the aforementioned, can not be relied upon to provide insight into MI’s seemingly “paradoxical” logic (as Baillie puts it), as they often admit confusion about MI’s logic.

## **8.2. MI'S LOGIC OF KNOWLEDGE OF GOD: ACCURATELY, ALBEIT DOGMATICALLY AND IMPRECISELY CRITICIZED**

I propose, therefore, that we take a different, if also somewhat unconventional, approach toward MI's evaluation. Specifically, I propose a method which: (1) evaluates each of MI's four functions and each of its two types of immediacy (normative-epistemological, descriptive-epistemological); (2) evaluates MI's epistemology on its own ground, including MI's appeal to multi-disciplinary intellectual currents (philosophical, psychological and theological) for its ground; (3) subjects MI's epistemology to more stringent and contemporary criticism, including insights from both philosophical-epistemological and empirical cognitive-psychological research concerned with CRE; (4) gathers up what survives the evaluation, and assesses MI's promise for contemporary Christian thought. An approach that is essential for getting at the broader research issue, the extent to which Baillie's MT affords contemporary Christian thought a promising concept, it is one faithful to Baillie's multi-disciplinary use of MI and warranted by the leading Baillie research's insight into how Baillie would employ MI and evaluate MI, were he alive.

### **8.2.1. MI's Normative-Epistemological Function: Its Logic of Immediacy Evaluated**

MI's internal logical consistency has been the primary target of the scholarly criticism. As such, we begin with an evaluation of the logical consistency of MI's first function, its normative-epistemological function.

#### **8.2.1.1 Normative-epistemological immediacy and the criterion of internal logical consistency: difficulties**

We recall Baillie's claim that knowledge of God is analogous to knowledge of human minds, in that the logic of each involves: (1) a direct acquaintance with or immediate "knowledge of" minds ("realities") that is (2) mediated by one's indirect, abstract "knowledge about" ("truths") the corporeal world, (3) "in, with and under" which these minds are immediately known. This immediate knowledge of God and human minds is dependent upon (4) an immediate apprehension ("faith", "a primary mode of apprehension" that transcends tactile-sensory perception); (5) an immediate



assent to belief (“faith”-as-“trust”) in the objective existence of each “reality” irreducible to the deliverances of discursive reasoning, including a highest inference; and (6) an immediate confirmation or verification (a “psychological certitude”) and not a logical certainty of the authenticity of the human’s encounter with another mind. Knowledge of God and knowledge of humans are also analogous in that (7) direct, primary personal knowledge “of” these realities can epistemologically correspond to second-order truths “about” these realities. This “other-minds” analogy (as it has been called) is underwritten by a critical-realist epistemology that stipulates: humans can have and do have a mediated-immediate knowledge of an objectively existing God that is (partially) analogous to humans’ mediated-immediate knowledge of objectively existing human minds. Baillie’s ground for the analogy is ultimately theological: the God-human ontological and epistemological correspondences are ultimately known by faith (trust; i.e., divine revelation)—a response to faith’s apprehension of divine action. Faith’s apprehension and appropriation of divine disclosure in Jesus Christ is possible in part, because of its mediation by moral consciousness: all humans have, in their moral consciousness of value, immediate knowledge of knowledge of the ground of all being and knowing who is Value. God and knowledge of God provides the condition for the mediation and experience of immediate knowledge—not merely of seeming knowledge—of other realities (minds).

The logic of the other-minds analogy, which underwrites MI’s normative-epistemological function (to argue for the reasonableness of knowledge of God), presupposes, then, veridical immediate knowledge of God. Does Baillie logically contradict himself when he maintains that humans have both an epistemologically immediate (non-discursive) knowledge of God (and human minds), and a mediated (discursive) knowledge about God (and human minds)? We have found the scholarly criticism maintaining that mediated knowledge and immediate knowledge are strictly logically incompatible and/or logically incompatible, as they are psychologically incompatible. We recall that the main line of this often not fully developed argument is: discursive knowledge about someone (mediated knowledge) logically negates the possibility of non-discursive knowledge of (immediate knowledge) that someone, be that someone God, other humans, or oneself. The present concern, then, is not, for example,

whether the epistemic status of MI's pre-reflective awareness can theoretically constitute justified true belief. Neither is the concern even with what might constitute justification-conferring conditions for immediate knowledge. The concern, rather, is whether it is logically possible to have immediate "knowledge of" someone's mind—in the first place.

### **8.2.1.2 Normative-epistemological immediacy and the problem of intentionality: logical difficulties**

I shall argue that MI's logic of immediacy suffers several difficulties, including its claim that humans have immediate knowledge. We begin with the problem of intentionality and its "implications" from MI's (analogous minds-based) function as a normative epistemology.

The problem of intentionality is the thought that consciousness of something (or someone) presupposes direction at and/or knowledge about that something (or someone). The argument, in brief, is that one must recognize object "X"—hence, know "that X" is being recognized—in order to have knowledge of X. However, if subject "S" has knowledge "that X", then it would appear to follow logically that S has propositional knowledge "about X". However, if S has propositional knowledge "about X", then, the question arises: How is immediate knowledge "of X" logically possible? For immediate knowledge is, by definition, non-propositional knowledge.

At first glance, this strikes me as a reasonable line of argument. Indeed, even when Baillie does maintain, on theological ground, that God provides practical knowledge in a direct encounter—that is, does not provide "knowledge that", but "knowledge what" (we are to do) and/or "knowledge how" (we should live our lives)—it would appear that one must still have to know "that God" is being "immediately" known. Indeed, the problem of intentionality (hereafter, POI) must be brought to bear not only on Baillie's enduring position that humans have immediate knowledge of God in their moral consciousness of value; it must be applied also to MI's epistemology: MI's epistemology, though concerned primarily with a specifically Christian knowledge of God, is dependent upon Baillie's claim that humans have immediate knowledge of God in their moral consciousness of value: it is because humans have immediate knowledge of Goodness, that they are able, at least in part, to recognize Goodness—indeed, Goodness in Jesus

Christ. Consequently, inasmuch as POI undermines the claim for moral consciousness' immediate knowledge of God, POI's logic, by extension, infects MI's epistemology of Christian knowledge of God. Then, of course, there is still the issue of POI's implications for MI's epistemology *per se*.

As we have seen, the criticism of MI has tended to be short on both the sophistication of its arguments and, with that, the substantiation of its claims. Consequently, we will have to strengthen those arguments by anticipating how they could plausibly be developed. For example, one could maintain, in defense of the logic of immediacy that underwrites MI's other-minds analogy, that MI's epistemology presupposes that S does not know at the (T1) initial time of the mind-encounter, be it a God-human or a human-human encounter, whom S is encountering—i.e., that it is only at (T2) a latter time that one comes to know “immediately” that one knows God (“that God”). The same line of reasoning could be applied to immediate knowledge of human minds. This seems a plausible line of defense for MI's epistemology, as MI's epistemology does allow that humans have something like subconscious pre-reflective knowledge of God (cf. T1). We have also found (Chapter 2) that, accordingly, the Christian apologist should aim to bring to the fore of humans' consciousness (cf. T2) such latent, non-discursive knowledge of God (cf. Baillie's advocacy of Cook Wilson's epistemology in *OKG*).

This line of defense against POI would incur at least two difficulties, however. For one, it is seemingly logically non-reconcilable with Baillie's final position on the logic of a mediated-immediate knowledge of God. In *SPG* Baillie maintains, as does he relentlessly through his career, that immediate knowledge of other minds is always mediated by propositional knowledge, though never established by logical entailment nor verified by logical certainty. Accordingly, he maintains that immediate or non-propositional knowledge of God derives from a “primary mode of apprehension”, faith, and that “psychological certitude” is that which verifies as veridical knowledge of God. To contend that psychological certitude validates a direct apprehension “~~that~~ God” is being immediately known, however, is merely to reassert that one can have an immediate knowledge of God devoid of logical certainty. While this move may cohere with Baillie's theological epistemology—namely, a priori knowledge of God is mediated by ordinary

human experience—to counter POI with the logic that S, at (T1), knew, though did not know consciously that S knew, that S was directly encountering Mind; but that S did come, at (T2), to know consciously (albeit still immediately or non-propositionally) the Mind hitherto encountered directly; is, I think, to explain away the very issue: the possibility of non-contradictory immediate knowledge of God (and human minds) in the first place (and at the first time). Secondly, this tack would plausibly introduce logical-coherence difficulties for MI’s logic: it would suppose that S engaged in additional discursive reasoning and abstraction (mediated thought) between (T1) the time of S’s direct encounter with a subconsciously known God and (T2) the time that S comes to the conscious realization that S has had knowledge of God—a knowledge which at (T2) is now disclosed to S by the “primary mode of apprehension” and verified by a “psychological certitude” as being thus: S has subconsciously, latently and immediately had immediate knowledge of God all along—i.e., since (T1). This strikes me as a plausibly escapist strategy—were it even admitted as coherent reasoning. In short, if indeed it is problematic enough to contend persuasively that a mediated-immediate knowledge of God could (somehow) bypass propositional knowledge “that God” at T1; this scenario demands that yet more discursive language and cognitive operations mediate (i.e., provide more propositional “knowledge that’s” to bear upon) one’s now consciously immediate knowledge of one’s hitherto subconsciously immediate (i.e., non-propositional) “knowledge of” God (or another mind). While such additional ratiocination may facilitate the sensory mediation of (seemingly) immediate or intuitive knowledge of (seemingly) non-corporeal abstract phenomena (e.g., intuitive knowledge of mathematics and cognitive insight into physics-oriented theorizing<sup>475</sup>); Baillie ostensibly maintains the contrary: there is a negative correlation between propositional knowledge about non-corporeal realities and immediate knowledge of those realities. Indeed, language's logic can confound humans’ apprehension of the very ground of Being

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<sup>475</sup>For an instructive account of the popularity of mathematical platonism amongst mathematicians, see: Grygiel, Wojciech. "Mathematicians on Mathematical Platonism: An Interesting Discussion (Matematycy o platonizmie matematycznym. Zapis ciekawej dyskusji)", in *Logos i Ethos (Logos and Ethos)*, 2, 2010, pp. 7-26. For a classic approach to mathematical platonism, see: Gottlob Frege's 1884 publication *Die Grundlagen der Arithmetik, eine logisch mathematische Untersuchung über den Begriff der Zahl*. Breslau: W. Koebner. Transl. as *The Foundations of Arithmetic: A Logico-Mathematical Enquiry into the Concept of Number* by J. L. Austin. 1953. Oxford: Blackwell. Second edn.

and Knowledge—i.e., obfuscate knowledge of the Personality who makes immediate knowledge logically possible.<sup>476</sup>If, then, S has more propositional knowledge at (T2) than at (T1), it is not entirely clear how an increasingly language-laden S at (T2) would be better equipped epistemically for immediate knowledge of Mind. In keeping with Baillie's logic, better that S should come to Jesus with the so-called mind of a child—particularly if the mediation of immediate knowledge of Mind entails a noetic structure bereft of discursive knowledge of Mind. Regardless, this line does not persuade as a rebuttal of POI.

We can push it a bit further, however: given the logical difficulties that attend to Baillie's claim—discursive reasoning (i.e., mediated knowledge) can obscure a Theologic (as-known) that verifies S's immediate knowledge of God—defenders of MI could plausibly counter POI's challenge with the modified position that immediate knowledge of other minds, be it conscious or subconscious knowledge, is initially (T1) not mediated by discursive knowledge at all: S's knowledge of God at (T1) is chronologically antecedent to any mediated knowledge; discursive reasoning only subsequently operates upon, if at times does falsify, immediate knowledge of God (and other minds). There is indeed room here, as MI's logic of knowledge of God maintains mediated-immediate knowledge of God is logically prior to mediated-immediate knowledge of other realities. Nonetheless, it also maintains that these paradoxically immediate knowledges of God and other minds are *co-terminously* given to each human by God and that each is consciously known by each human at that same time. Put differently, MI's epistemology presupposes the logical priority of immediate knowledge of God, though maintains immediate knowledge of God is not chronologically prior to knowledge of the other realities that mediate knowledge of God at (T1): oneself, other minds, and the world. Moreover, were MI's proponents to appeal to an ontological monism of sorts, maintain that these manifold reality-knowledges are grounded, from S's perspective, in a pre-reflective awareness of realities; and assert that there is no apparent logical conflict between "knowledge of X" and "knowledge that X", as there is effectively no mediation by

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<sup>476</sup> "The infinite riches of the divine Personality who is revealed to us in Christ cannot be exhaustively enclosed in any number of abstract nouns. In every such abstraction, in every such conceptualizing, we are also to some extent falsifying by regarding one aspect of the living whole in temporary isolation; and not all possible abstractions added together can make up the living whole itself." *IRRT*, p. 27

discursive reasoning; this move would not defeat POI, because it would yet remain that MI's epistemology of immediacy is dependent on (mediated by) what Baillie maintains is disclosed in and to moral consciousness: immediate knowledge "about what" God is and wants us to do (i.e., discursive knowledge).

We find, then, that MI's other-minds analogy is ultimately grounded in Baillie's theological epistemology of revelatory religious experience: it is to his theology of revelation, and not, for example, to the proper basicity of belief in other minds, that Baillie ultimately appeals as ground for the reasonableness of his other-minds analogy. Consequently, its force (or lack thereof) derives from Baillie's theology of revelation itself—a problematic one, as we shall soon discover. Within this theological-epistemological framework, Baillie uses MI's normative-epistemological function to contend for the reasonableness of knowledge of God. Employing a theological method with which he attempts to correlation theological presuppositions about immediate knowledge of God in particular with empirical philosophical interpretations and epistemologies about knowledge of other-minds knowledge in general, the mediating theologian aims to reconcile the logic of mediated-immediate knowledge about persons with mediated-immediate knowledge of God. Baillie's own thought effectively negates the logical possibility of such reconciliation, however. Indeed, were the philosopher of religion inclined to admit as reasonable Baillie's claim that ordinary human experience testifies to humans having a supra-propositional knowledge of human personalities and God—one that transcends or bypasses the categories of language and thought—such knowledge invariably demands at least *some* propositional knowledge about the *identity* of the personalities (God, other minds) believed to be known non-discursively. MI's logic denies that this is possible, however, as it maintains, in both *OKG* and in *SPG*, that knowledge of other minds is essentially immediate. An aspect of MI's logic that does not afford a plausible solution to POI, it compromises the force of the theological epistemology which, underwriting MI's description of knowledge of realities, does as such underwrite Baillie's other-minds analogy. This descriptive-epistemological deficit, in turn, undermines MI's normative-epistemological function—an argument for the reasonableness of Christian immediate knowledge of God. MI's normative-

epistemological difficulty with POI counts against the promise of this function of MI as a contribution to contemporary Christian thought.

### 8.2.1.3 Normative-epistemological immediacy as a “primary mode of apprehension”: logical difficulties

Baillie’s conceptualization of immediate knowledge as “a primary mode of apprehension” also compromises the staying power of MI’s function as a normative epistemology. Evidence for this shortcoming derives from the diachronic trace provided in the thesis. We recall, for example, that when Baillie couches MI’s logic of immediacy in the language of faith—again, now identified as a “primary mode of apprehension”—he relies squarely on MI’s normative-epistemological logic in his effort to counter Flew’s falsification challenge, in particular.

In “A Religious Way of Knowing,”<sup>477</sup> C.B Martin engages Baillie’s thought in *OKG* and criticizes Baillie’s logic of faith *qua* “primary mode of apprehension”. En route, Martin notes that Baillie conceives of knowledge of God and knowledge of other minds as analogous in at least three ways: (1) each is mediated by other knowledges; (2) each is an immediate knowledge; (3) each is self-authenticating and describable only in terms of itself. He also notes that the various analogies developed in *OKG* are not, according to Baillie, perfect: (4) God-knowledge and human-knowledge are only partially analogous to each other; (5) God-knowledge and human-knowledge are each only partially analogous to humans’ knowledge of tridimensional space: for tridimensional space is also conceived by Baillie as a self-authenticating, mediated-immediate knowledge.

We see, then, that MI’s logic is not only the logical foundation for Baillie’s other-minds analogy; it is a hermeneutic or interpretative model which Baillie uses to conceptualize humans’ knowledge of tridimensional space—a reality, the mediated-immediate knowledge of which does itself mediated humans’ other mediated-immediate knowledge (e.g., immediate self-knowledge mediated by knowledge about bodily states). How does Baillie aim to show that there are multiple mediated and immediate

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<sup>477</sup> In *New Essays in Philosophical Theology*, Antony Flew and Alasdair MacIntyre, eds. (London: SCM Press, 1955), pp. 80-95.

knowledges? Martin wryly summarizes Baillie's thought (and that of H.H. Farmer) on the matter of immediate knowledge of God: "You do not know what the experience of God is until you have had it." He then focuses his attack on the mode by which humans allegedly apprehend minds and other realities directly and know them immediately, Baillie's "primary mode of apprehension". "What Professor Baillie does not see is that according to his criteria anything can qualify as a primary mode of knowledge." Indeed, one might as easily vie for a primary mode of apprehension for a direct encounter with, immediate knowledge of, and immediate verification of Italy: "You must go to Naples and not just to Venice. A postcard is no substitute." Martin concludes:

All that this [direct experience] proves is that a description of one group of sensations A in terms of another set of sensations B is never sufficient for knowing group A . . . This helps in no way at all to prove that such experience is direct apprehension of God and helps in no way to support the existential claim 'God exists'.<sup>478</sup>

Martin's position, then, is that MI's logic, which underwrites Baillie's other-minds analogy and Baillie's conceptualization of tridimensional space, is one effectively negated by Baillie's apparent willingness to permit direct knowledge of any reality: anything can be claimed to be known immediately by a primary mode of apprehension. Thus, MI's logic adds no support to the claim "God exists".

Martin's criticism of what I have identified as MI's normative-epistemological function appears reasonable as is. It gains force when one considers that, whereas MI's normative logic in *OKG* (1939) posits immediate knowledge of only four loci in general (God, other minds, self, world), and likens these mediated-immediate knowledges to a mediated-immediate knowledge of tridimensional space; MI's normative logic in *SPG*, published seven years after Martin's criticism (1955), now underwrites a substantially more elaborate attempt by Baillie to elucidate how mediate-immediate knowledge of the "world" (in particular) is partially analogous to mediated-immediate knowledge of God.

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<sup>478</sup> Martin, "A Religious Way of Knowing", pp. 81-82.



For example, when in *SPG* Baillie attempts to strengthen his claim that subject-knowledge (God, other minds, self) is partially analogous to object-knowledge, he now maintains that each of the mediated-immediate knowledges (God, others, self, world) requires “a primary apprehension”. Accordingly, Baillie expands MI’s epistemological scope and asks its logic to bear a much heavier epistemological burden: for now humans’ mediated-immediate sense of God’s presence is claimed to be analogous to our (so-called) “senses” of other things—such as such our senses of proportion, literary style, duty, and the holy.

Specifically, these new senses are analogous in that: (1) each sense provides corresponding knowledge of their realities; (2) each sense’s knowledge of these realities is a mediated knowledge—each “presuppose for their possibility the experience gained through the bodily senses”; (3) each sense avails immediate knowledge of reality: each mode of apprehension does “enable us to perceive something not otherwise perceptible; to *perceive* it ... not merely to conceive it.” In addition, (4) each of these “senses” (modes of apprehension) is employed on a regular basis in our ordinary language, Baillie contends. Consequently, argues Baillie, (5) each mode of apprehension or “awareness” should be recognized as so far analogous to the corporeal senses as to enable us to perceive something not otherwise perceptible.” Maintaining that that these analogous senses enable humans to apprehend “an aspect of reality” “beyond the bodily senses” whereby one can have immediate knowledge of these realities—and not merely “a truth or proposition” about the corporeal world<sup>479</sup>—Baillie argues that immediate knowledge of God is, by analogy, a reasonable position: faith also constitutes “a mode of apprehension which perceives something more [God] than the total reality with which we are confronted than is manifest, or is expected to be manifest, to the senses”.<sup>480</sup> Consequently, maintains Baillie, faith should be considered a legitimate mode of apprehension, and “sense of the presence of God” should be admitted as meaningful language. In *SPG*, then, we find Baillie using MI to provide a fuller account of the media which can mediated immediate knowledges, including immediate knowledge of God. We also find Baillie using MI to reconcile the now greater contextual emphasis that his put

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<sup>479</sup> *SPG*, pp. 50-59, *passim*.

<sup>480</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 126.

on divine action with an emphasis on religious experience not unlike Baillie's early thought. Here surely is evidence for MI's importance for Baillie's latter MT.<sup>481</sup>

There are, however, difficulties with Martin's analysis. For one, he incorrectly interprets Baillie as contending that anything can be a mode of apprehension. Baillie does not. For example, Baillie does not posit a primary mode for the apprehension of God's non-existence; that there is a "sense" of atheism, Baillie's position being rather that all persons believe in God in the "bottom of their hearts", if also, to varying degrees, reject God with "the top of their minds." Moreover, Baillie spells out the criteria for what can count as a mode of direct apprehension. For example, Baillie makes it clear—in the *OKG* perused by Martin—that "faith" alone is the *primary* mode of apprehending Reality, God. When, for instance, Baillie maintains that a "sense of duty" is a mode of direct apprehension of Duty, he distinguishes this mode of direct apprehension from a direct apprehension of God. Indeed, he makes it plain that a direct apprehension of duty is not entirely analogous to the primary mode of apprehension that is faith in God. That Baillie does reject such a rigid analogy can be found, for instance, in Baillie's distancing of his thought from a Kantian thought which wrongly grants epistemic authority to direct apprehension of duty over direct apprehension of God.

We, on the other hand, have argued that the Source of the obligation is Himself directly revealed to us and that it is in this vision of His glory and His holiness that our sense of obligation is born . . . [I]t is no mere law that is revealed to us, but *a living Person*, and what we call the moral law is but an abstraction which our limited and limiting minds make from the concreteness of the living Glory that is revealed.<sup>482</sup>

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<sup>481</sup> We are also reminded of McIntyre's observation that mediated immediacy enabled Baillie to regard the university as a community whose various fields and disciplines of inquiry mediated knowledge of God: clearly Baillie is using MI's epistemology in *SPG* to engage increasingly multiple disciplines. John McIntyre, "Theology and the University: John Baillie", *New College Bulletin*, no. 14, September, 1983. Cited in A.C. Cheyne, *Studies in Scottish Church History*. Edinburgh: T&T Clark, 1999, pp. 219-20.

<sup>482</sup> *OKG*, p. 162.

Furthermore, there is Baillie's thought on the meaningfulness of the language about the so-called modes of apprehension. Here, again, Baillie does not contend that the modes of apprehension are co-equal in terms of the quality of knowledge that they provide, as Martin would suggest. Rather, Baillie is quite clear about what constitutes a sense of apprehension in the more general sense. For one, the senses of must be "senses" which conform to ordinary language usage (e.g., "sense of duty"). Secondly, these require a measure of philosophical support (e.g., Heims's tridimensional space). Thirdly, the modes of apprehension and their respective mediated-immediate knowledges of their realities must appear to be connected epistemologically to faith's primary apprehension of God. It is within the context of his elucidation of the modes' criteria, similarities and subtleties of difference, that Baillie, yet furthermore, underscores that faith's direct apprehension of God is quintessentially unlike any other direct apprehension: faith is an apprehension of the ground of being Whom, being also the ground of knowing, makes possible the modes of awareness of all lesser realities—knowledge of tri-dimensional space included: "We reach the unconditional only in an unconditional imperative that reaches us."<sup>483</sup> This is not only a statement that God is known in one's values; it is a claim to humans having *a priori* knowledge of God's attributes—a knowledge mediated by sensory experience. In this respect, Baillie endorses Kant's position that direct knowledge of God does not legitimate "a theory of supersensible realities" as do the 'pretended practitioners of natural theology'." Baillie also endorses Kant's position that "in the obligation that is revealed to us some element of knowledge must be implicitly contained"—a practical knowledge to which it is right to submit (though, Baillie insists that God's demand is to accept the gift—not a law—of Christ's salvation). That said, Baillie would yet have faith's primary apprehension of Reality conceived as knowledge mediated by other knowledges, albeit it yet paradoxically a direct apprehension and immediate knowledge of both God and God's ideals.

While there is no temporal priority of one knowledge over the other, the logical priority lies with our knowledge of God ... [O]ur knowledge of all ideals is *a priori*; not chronologically prior to our knowledge of the actual, but a

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<sup>483</sup> *OKG*, p. 157

necessary condition of our ability to ascribe to the actual such characters as good and bad, just and unjust, wise and foolish.<sup>484</sup>

Baillie elsewhere adds:

The Westminster Shorter Catechism is . . . using directly applicable and non-symbolic language when it answers the question ‘What is God?’ by saying ‘God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal and unchangeable, in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth.’<sup>485</sup>

Baillie’s position, then, is that whatever “truths” are immediately known by other modes of apprehension (literary style, tridimensional space, the holy, etc.), they are truths known ultimately, because one has a primary apprehension of God and God alone.

Baillie, then, hardly allows anything to be a mode of immediate apprehension of reality. Although there is assuredly much to be experienced in a direct experience of “Naples” (or “poverty” or a “blue sky”—Martin’s other examples as possible modes of apprehension), passing familiarity with the logic of MI’s epistemology indicates that it roundly rejects these as legitimate modes of apprehension. Martin, quite simply, is wrong on this important epistemology-related point; and his red herring-like critique does not persuade that Baillie’s use of “sense of the presence of God” is non-meaningful language.

Nonetheless, Martin rightly concludes that Baillie’s argument for the meaningfulness of “sense of the presence of God”—namely, Baillie’s appeal to multiple modes of knowledge and “senses” (e.g., Heims’s tridimensional space)—fails to buttress Baillie’s claim that God-knowledge and other minds-knowledge are both mediated and immediate. Again, this is not because Martin offers much of an argument, let alone a persuasive one; rather, it is because my own analysis shows that Baillie’s own criteria for a direct knowledge of God’s Presence negates the logical possibility that Baillie *could* garner support for his analogy via appeal to this newly introduced “primary mode of apprehension”. After all, such a “sense of the presence of God”, Baillie contends, is

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<sup>484</sup> *SPG*, pp. 117-118.

<sup>485</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 119.

“something that cannot be imagined by one who does not already possess it, since it cannot be described to him in terms of anything else than itself [emphasis mine].”<sup>486</sup> This, however, is exactly what the mediating theologian *qua* apologist attempts, when, employing MI’s normative-epistemological logic, he attempts to forge a logical connection between God-knowledge, human mind-knowledge, and tri-dimensional space-knowledge. One might attempt to rebut with the claim that Baillie does differentiate these mediated-modes of apprehension, however—that Baillie does not liken mediated immediate knowledge of tridimensional space to mediated-immediate knowledge of Personality. Nonetheless, were one thus inclined to permit these types of knowledge as each entirely *sui generis*, it remains that Baillie grounds each knowledge in faith’s primary apprehension of God: save that Baillie overtly presupposes both an ontological basis for humans’ knowledge of tridimensional space (tridimensional space is the manifestation of its ground, Being) and an epistemological connection between knowledge of tridimensional space and knowledge of God (the ground of all Knowledge); his very apologetic strategy tacitly presuppose such an epistemological connection (hence his attempt to forge the partial analogy *qua* mediating theologian)—all of this is in keeping with MI the core logic of whose normative epistemology asserts that immediate knowledge of God is mediated “in, with and under” both tridimensional space and humans’ knowledge thereof. As I have shown, the logic of MI’s normative epistemology does not clearly integrate, however, the various senses of apprehension in a logically consistent way.

Baillie, then, does identify what qualifies a mode as a mode of direct apprehension (i.e., immediate knowledge), contrarily to Martin’s claim. However, in keeping with the thrust and tenor of Martin’s critique, I conclude that the logic of MI’s other-minds analogy is, as it stands in our analysis, problematic—an apparently muddled logic; a tautology at best.

Does MI’s normative-epistemological logic even possess the coherence to grant it tautological status, however?

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<sup>486</sup> *OKG*, p. 217.

#### 8.2.1.4 Normative-epistemological immediacy and knowledge of the mind of Jesus Christ: logical difficulties

In addition to the POI, and Baillie's thought on immediate knowledge as "a primary mode of apprehension", Baillie's thought on the mediation of knowledge of the mind of Jesus Christ also compromises MI's normative-epistemological logic.

MI's logic presupposes that immediate knowledge of God requires one to be in the presence of one's fellows. As Baillie puts it, "only when I am in fellowship with my fellow men does knowledge of God come to me individually."<sup>487</sup> Such "fellowship," for Baillie, requires that the individual be in a relationship characterized by *agapē* with at least one person. Can a subject "S" have knowledge of God when S is not in the presence of others? Baillie surely thought so; he often isolated himself in his study to pray to God.<sup>488</sup> He was undoubtedly also aware that Jesus himself is thought to have sought God's will by the physical withdrawal of himself from other bodies (e.g., Jesus' wandering in the wilderness for forty days).

Accordingly, MI's logic presupposes that S can have knowledge of God, when S is not in the physical presence of another human being. However, this raises the question: How can MI's logic self-consistently maintain that S's immediate knowledge of God must be mediated by S's fellowship with others, without S being in the physical presence of those others? There would appear to be at least two options: (1) the mediation of knowledge of God requires that S be in fellowship with other human minds whose bodies were once perceived, though are no longer being perceived in "fellowship"; (2) the mediation of knowledge of God is not contingent upon S's having ever perceived the bodies of those with whom S is in fellowship.

To tease out some tacit assumptions of option (1), one could contend that MI's normative-epistemological logic presupposes that S can fellowship with other minds, while not perceiving those minds' bodies—that is, that S can apprehend another mind's ideas in S's present situation and fellowship with that mind whose body is not perceived. For example, on this reading S can fellowship with the mind of the Apostle John, while not perceiving John's body—via the mediation of the ideas attributed to John in, say,

<sup>487</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 179 Baillie's italicized emphasis.

<sup>488</sup> Thomas F. Torrance, "A living Sacrifice: In Memoriam, John Baillie, 1886-1960", *Religion in Life*, Vol. 30, No. 3 (summer, 1961), pp. 329-333.

John 3:16. To translate this option into the language of MI: S is having immediate knowledge of the mind of John, as mediated “in, with and under” S’s discursive knowledge about what S thinks is John’s thought.

Save issues of translation, hermeneutics and exegesis, this line of reasoning proves difficult for MI’s logic. For one, it is difficult to conceive how S can be said to be in “fellowship” with another mind—viz., in a fellowship characterized by *agapē* that involves “service” to the “need(s)” of another mind. How does S meet the need of S’s brother in this situation? Baillie does not provide an answer. MI’s criteria for the mediation of immediate knowledge is also problematic for option (1): MI’s logic appears to maintain that immediate knowledge of human minds is contingent upon (mediated by) S’s perceptions of—that is, discursive knowledge about—the body or bodies with which S is fellowshiping. Baillie elaborates:

It must be allowed, or rather insisted upon, that the recognition of other minds, though it is not built up from the perception of the bodies associated with these minds but is itself an apprehension of a direct and primary kind, is nevertheless never given save in conjunction with such a perception [emphasis mine].<sup>489</sup>

Baillie attaches a footnote to the above quote—one which contends that even if telepathy is possible, it does not instance a counterfactual, when squared with MI’s above-indicated criteria for knowledge of other minds. This is because telepathy would provide, on Baillie’s reading, an inferential knowledge about ideas of another mind—never immediate knowledge *of* that mind.

Yet, is it not something like a telepathic process that MI’s logic presupposes, when it maintains that knowledge of the Christian gospel is epistemically necessary for Christian knowledge of God? For even if it is the case that S heard of the gospel message while fellowshiping in *agapē* with a mind (M1) whose body was empirically perceived; and, more so, that M1 had that message mediated to it by another mind (M2) whose body had been, at that time, empirically perceived—and so forth (i.e., as toward an infinite

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<sup>489</sup> *OKG*, p. 214 ('59).

past-historical regression); it seems rather unlikely that such historical mediation of the gospel involved all persons having empirically perceived all the bodies of those person(s) who mediated the gospel message.

From a logical perspective, then, if MI's logic contends for (1), it would apparently self-defeat its internal logic, as Baillie is not clear about how these minds and bodies interact with each other across history. Baillie's less-than-precise elucidation about history's mediation of knowledge of other minds anticipates difficulties that pertain to MI's descriptive epistemological functions (divine action, revelation, religious experience). Those difficulties will be discussed latter in this chapter. Here, we observe that position (1) does not adequately counter the widely held claim that MI's logic is self-contradictory: its logic fails to explain clearly the mediation of immediate knowledge of Jesus Christ by S's *agapē*-oriented fellowship with other minds (e.g., Gospel writers)—“in, with and under” history.

If MI's logic is to avoid seeming self-contradiction, it must maintain (2): S's previous fellowship with human minds (i.e., perceptions of their bodies) enables S to come to knowledge of God; and this fellowship, in turn, enables S to recognize the mind of God in Jesus Christ—even when absent from the human bodies with whose minds one has had fellowship. That this is likely the more faithful interpretation of MI's normative epistemology is evidenced by Baillie's use of MI-related language: knowledge of God as MI, a unique experience of the truth, is mediated only through persons historically antecedent to oneself.<sup>490</sup> How, then, does MI's logic explain how immediate knowledge of God is mediated to S by other minds when S is not in the presence of those minds' bodies?

Our knowledge of other minds is not merely a derivative from our knowledge of other minds or of our own minds or of both together, but is itself a primary and original mode of consciousness of equal right with these others and having like them a character *sui generis*. Expressing it in Kantian language, we may say that the conception of society is not an *a posteriori* but an *a priori* conception.<sup>491</sup>

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<sup>490</sup> *OKG*, p. 185 ('59).

<sup>491</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 213 ('59).



Baillie, then, is persuaded that a logically *a priori* conception of society—a primary and original mode of consciousness—helps mediate humans’ knowledge of other minds. This mode of consciousness, he adds, arises from our encounter with human bodies in general:

We cannot possess the conception of otherness prior to our first encounter with another, yet that conception is not inductively derived from the encounter, but is called into being on occasion of it and contributes to it the very character which would be required as the basis of such an induction [emphasis mine]...<sup>492</sup>

Elsewhere, Baillie remarks that this primary mode of apprehension arises from our experience, governs all of our social interactions with human minds, including our abstractions of truths from immediate knowledge of these minds; and mediates our knowledge about those minds’ bodies:

This non-inferential element which lies at the root of our social experience and was present at its birth, must be allowed to be present throughout the whole subsequent course of it, playing at every part a necessary and constitutive part. It is thus, indeed, that the intuitive and discursive elements in experience always intermingle. The discursive element is at every point present, at no point fundamental. It is essentially of the nature of a construction, grounded upon one intuition, and forming a bridge to another [emphasis mine].<sup>493</sup>

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<sup>492</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 214.

<sup>493</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 213.

MI's logic, then, apparently presupposes this: an immediate knowledge of others requires [mediating] knowledge about their bodies—this via a “primary mode of consciousness” which, “called into being” (somehow), enables humans subsequently to have knowledge of other humans.

Baillie's reasoning raises issues for the logical consistency of MI's normative epistemology. For one, “called into being” fails to elucidate the process of this so-called mediation. Secondly, Baillie's “primary mode of consciousness” fails to make clear how knowledge of God's being in Jesus Christ can possibly come to S in S's concrete circumstance. Indeed, regardless of whether this mode of apprehension cogently conjoins one's intuitive knowledge of realities with one's discursive knowledge about those realities (i.e., it exists), MI's logic negates the possibility of immediate knowledge of a human mind when one does not have a perception of the human body to which that mind corresponds.

The problem that I have isolated with MI's logic might appear a trivial point of contention. After all, MI's logic does at least *contend* that immediate knowledge of a human mind is contingent upon sensory perception of that human's body. Furthermore, Baillie does at least propose a mode of apprehension for S to have (somehow) increased knowledge of God in the absence of fellowship with a human mind. It could also be noted that (2) is also open to at least one alternative modification: S has had at least one *agapē*-like fellowship in S's *past* with a mind whose body was perceived; and that fellowship continues to mediate the higher knowledge of God which S finds, by faith, in Jesus Christ, though that body is no longer perceived. Nonetheless, regardless of how one interprets (2)—in its naked form: previous fellowship makes it possible for S to have a knowledge of God's being in Jesus Christ—a glaring difficulty persists: *How can one have knowledge of the mind of Jesus Christ, even when mediated by knowledge about the Gospel?* MI's logic, again, stipulates that a perception of a mind's body is epistemologically necessary for immediate knowledge of that body's mind. However, even if fellowshiping with a football stadium of Bible-reading fellows in a *koinonia* of *agapē*, it remains, or so it would seem, that such fellowship will not give rise to a sensory perception of Jesus Christ's human body. However, it must, I have maintained, if MI's

normative epistemology is not to violate its own logic about the mediation of Christian knowledge of God.

The logic of MI's normative epistemology, then, appears<sup>494</sup> to negate the possibility of immediate knowledge of God in Jesus Christ in the absence of sensory-perceptual mediation of Jesus Christ's body. This would appear to compromise the logical coherence of MI's normative-epistemological function. Furthermore, MI's logic about such mediation compromises MI's other-mind's analogy—an analogy that presupposes a partially analogous epistemological correspondence between knowledge of God in Jesus Christ and knowledge of the other human minds who mediate that knowledge.<sup>495</sup>

### **8.2.1.5 Normative-epistemological immediacy: logically self-contradictory**

Based on the unresolved tensions indicated in the previous section—those pertaining to POI, Baillie's thought on the immediacy of the primary mode of apprehension, and his thought on the mediation of knowledge of Christ—I conclude that MI's normative epistemology is logically inconsistent.

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<sup>494</sup> I suppose that Baillie could take a Berkeleian approach to resolve this tension. However, we have found Baillie rejecting Berkeley's epistemology in IOR.

<sup>495</sup> MI's internal logical difficulties, and that logic's implications for Baillie's Christology (and vice versa), have not received much attention in the literature, though they have been anticipated by Fergusson, who contends, as I have been fond of quoting, that the "outstanding weakness" in Baillie's theology is its failure to identify which is the primary source for knowledge of God—a universal awareness of God's presence or the Christian church's Gospel proclamation? They are anticipated in this manner: MI's function as a normative epistemology (i.e., its other-minds analogy) is underwritten by Baillie's idea of revelation: it is the theological basis for Baillie's claim to knowledge of God; it is the concept that Baillie the apologist uses to respond to secular currents—this by correlating his idea of revelation with, to borrow from Tillich, humans' existential concerns. Consequently, if Fergusson's criticism is valid, then MI's logic must identify the primary locus of the mediation of revelation—knowledge of Jesus Christ or a universal knowledge of God. The two are surely related in Baillie's thought—at least in theory: MI's logic straightforwardly maintains that the Mediator is the supreme incarnation of God, as well as the logical center around and "in, with and under" whom a divine purposive-regulated history mediates God's grace and knowledge—universally. But this seems a rather difficult position to maintain cogently: for the seemingly self-conflicting logic that is MI's function as a normative epistemology, left unclarified, renders as logically impossible humans' realization of the *telos* for which Baillie's idea of revelation contends—a universal faith in Jesus Christ: it is logically impossible that all persons have had the sensory perception of Jesus' body necessary for the mediation of that knowledge. A logically coherent explanation of how this occurs within Baillie's theological epistemology of revelation is necessary for Baillie's thought to overcome plausibly its most outstanding theological weakness.

### 8.2.1.6 Normative-epistemological immediacy and external correspondence criterion: an infinite regress

Additional difficulties attend to the logic of MI's normative-epistemological function. These arise not so much from a straightforward rationalism which asks, "Is it logically possible to have an immediate though propositionally-mediated knowledge of another mind?" Rather, they derive from Baillie's attempt to reconcile MI with empirical observation. The question here is: "Does empirical observation suggest that so-called immediate knowledge of an object is not conceptualized by discursive knowledge about the object?" The correspondence question is a fair one to ask, as MI's other-minds analogy's representational realism presupposes epistemological correspondence between its own logic and empirically-based knowledge about matter, including minds' bodies.

It has been argued, on empirical ground, that an accurate description of religious experience must reject the logical possibility of immediate knowledge. Katz, who is well known for this type of argument, insists in his "Language, Epistemology and Mysticism":<sup>496</sup> "*There are NO pure (i.e., unmediated) experiences.*" He grounds his argument in empirical research on mystical experiences and humans' interpretations of those experiences. This research indicates that both ordinary and religious human experiences are influenced by our cognition. Emphasizing the socio-cultural and linguistic mediation of mystic experiences in particular, and how Zaehner and Stace have failed to recognize the logical implications which flow from discursive reasoning's mediation of mystical-experiential interpretations, Katz argues that these theorists, and those of a similar persuasion, falsely interpret the nature of the epistemological relationship between antecedent discursive knowledge brought to bear on an experience and the knowledge derived from a supposedly pure, core mystical experience; for when it comes to interpretation, "the symmetry is always one-directional: from 'experience' to 'beliefs'". Katz, however, maintains: "Beliefs shape experience, just as experience shapes belief". A better interpretation, as it is a more balanced interpretation, argues Katz, empirical evidence for its truer correspondence to experience is found alike in Jewish, Hindu, and Christian interpretations of mystical experiences: each brings

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<sup>496</sup> Steven T. Katz, "Language, Epistemology and Philosophical Analysis", in *Mysticism and Philosophical Analysis*, edited Steven T. Katz (London: Sheldon Press, 1978), pp. 22-74.

culturally tied concepts and symbols to bear on the interpretation of religious experiences.<sup>497</sup>

A substantial body of empirical psychological research supports Katz's thesis. For example, research indicates that humans are often convinced that they have implicit (intuitive, pre-reflective) knowledge of an object, when, in fact, that knowledge has been influenced by propositional knowledge. One such line of research explores how our mental “sets” affect our processing and evaluation of experiences. The research shows that inferential reasoning-based interpretations of object perception can take place so rapidly, that the processing takes place outside of our self-conscious awareness.

If you say that you have had a vision, the meaning of that vision of can make sense only within the context of the schema that was activated when the vision occurred. Schemas are said to be activated within milliseconds, automatically (Fiske and Taylor, 1991). Thus, when a vision occurs, your mind immediately activates the mental structure most relevant to your making sense of it, and it is given meaning within that. In this way, a general sense of awe is assigned a God-related meaning by someone with a devout Christian or Jewish schema but is given some other meaning by someone who does not have any particular religious schema. . . . Because the influence of schemas is virtually automatic, it could be said that their function is to help you decipher the immediate experience.<sup>498</sup>

There is considerable theorizing in the above passage, as well as a hint of explanatory psychological reductionism. However, the point is well made that humans often interpret an “immediate experience” as one devoid of non-discursive reasoning, when that experience is actually mediated by virtually automatic inferential reasoning. The prevalence of this rapid discursive mediation, and of the cognitive bias that often comes

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<sup>497</sup> See Katz, *ibid.*, pp. 22-46, for his argument.

<sup>498</sup> Raymond F. Paloutzian, *Invitation to the Psychology of Religion*, 2nd ed., Needham Heights, MA: Allyn & Bacon, 1996, p. 190.

with it, has been verified by a number of studies.<sup>499</sup> Collectively, these studies challenge the empirical basis for MI's analogy: namely, that ordinary experience testifies that humans immediately know other minds, despite mediated discursive knowledge about those minds' and their corresponding bodies. This empirical research counts against empirical ground for non-inferential knowledge, and undercuts MI's external correspondence with ordinary experience; for it evidences that are at least some times when humans claim pre-reflective immediate knowledge of objects, when in fact they are truths derived from inferential (non-immediate) knowledge about other information.

MI's normative epistemology also presupposes that immediate knowledge of God and immediate knowledge of humans are, according to an empirical examination of human experience, equally credible. As over against this, Franks Davis maintains that the analogy rightly contends that humans universally appear to take *prima facie* the veridicality of immediate knowledge of other minds, though falsely contends that humans universally appear to take *prima facie* the veridicality of immediate knowledge of a personal God. This lack of external correspondence, maintains Franks Davis, undermines the analogy to the extent that it shows it to be a disanalogy.<sup>500</sup> To translate Franks Davis's position into the language of MI: empirical research indicates that human minds tend to believe that knowledge of other minds is a MI, though tend not to believe that knowledge of a personal God is a MI.

In MI's defense, MI's proponents could point out that, yes, MI's logic does suppose that humans take *prima facie* the veridicality of immediate knowledge of a personal God—in the “bottom of their heart;” however, it also maintains that many persons live, with the “top of their minds”, in a state of conscious “denial”, banishing immediate knowledge of God to their subconscious through repression. One could then develop the argument that, as such, one would expect there to be empirical support for Frank's Davis's claim that many persons do not believe in a personal God immediately known; and that, consequently, Franks Davis line of attack does not undermine MI's

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<sup>499</sup> E.g., Stanley Schacter and Jerome Singer, “Cognitive, Social and Physiological Determinants of Emotional State”, *Psychological Review*, 69, 1962, 379-399. Alan Tormey, *The Concept of Expression*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1971. Leon Festinger and J.M. Carlsmith, “Cognitive Consequences of Forced Compliance”, *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 58, 203-210. Mark Cook, *Perceiving Others*. London: Methuen, 1979, Ch. 5.

<sup>500</sup> Caroline Franks Davis, *The Evidential Force of Religious Experience* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), p. 82.

logic. However, I do not think that such an appeal—humans are immediately aware of God, though not consciously aware of their being immediately aware of God—would persuade. For one, when Baillie’s epistemology appeals to the subconscious, it proves generally problematic for Baillie’s apologetic strategy, as Macquarrie has noted.<sup>501</sup> A more recent examination<sup>502</sup> of Baillie’s idea of immediacy supports Macquarrie’s position, as does an earlier and more-extensive analysis<sup>503</sup> of ideas of immediacy, Baillie’s included.

I add that this type of rebuttal could conceivably lead as well to an infinite regress—to an appeal to any number of strata of consciousness “in, with and under” which, a personal knowledge of God resides. For example, proponents of MI’s normative epistemology might attempt to rebut Franks Davis with the claim that, technically, it is not “in” the corporeal world, but rather it is “in” the “in, with, and under” of the corporeal world, that one directly encounters, direct apprehends, and immediately knows God and other minds: it is this stratum of Reality (as experienced) that enables one to know *prima facie* that one does know these minds.<sup>504</sup> Put differently, one could maintain that immediate knowledge of minds is mediated by multiple planes of reality (this time, however, as objectively existing “outside” the mind) which mediate a multiplicity of logics; one of these logics is known pre-reflectively; hence, the fact that humans do not universally appear to take *prima facie* the veridicality of a personal God. Save that this externalistic appeal to the subconscious would effectively explain away the ground for MI’s logic of divine action and revelation, it could plausibly lead to an infinite ontic (and epistemic) regress—to the posting of worlds “in, with and under” worlds “in, with and under” worlds... *ad infinitum*.

One could also take an internalistic approach, appeal to any number of strata—now ontologically localized and grounded in the human psyche—and attempt a rebut to the effect that it is “in, with and under” the individual’s human consciousness that personal knowledge of God resides. However, this move would suppose, amongst other

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<sup>501</sup> E.g., H.D. Lewis, *Philosophy of Religion* (London: English University Press, 1965), pp. 113-122; John Macquarrie, *In Search of Deity* (London: SCM, 1984), p. 44.

<sup>502</sup> Michael Sudduth, *The Reformed Objection to Natural Theology*, Farnham, UK and Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2009. See esp. Ch. 5.

<sup>503</sup> Robert Hoyler, "Unconscious Belief and Natural Theology", *Heythrop Journal*, 25, 1984, pp. 423-41.

<sup>504</sup> Stearns comes close to suggesting this maneuver, when he speculates about "in, with and under" as a model of Incarnation. See Stearns, "Mediated Immediacy: A Search for Some Models."

things, MI's advocacy of a phenomenalist idealism—that reality is ultimately limited to the mind's operations on sensory impression. MI's *normative* epistemology, for all of its subjectivity, is not so solipsistic, however. Consequently, if one would reconcile its logic of the mediation of Reality—one that clearly maintains that knowledge of God is mediated by sensory impressions derived from the corporeal world—the only seemingly possible way to do so would be to deny what MI's critical realism presupposes—namely, the objectively existence of realities (e.g., "minds"), veridical knowledge of those realities, and veridical knowledge about truths epistemologically connected to them—and to reconceive of the content mediated to the mind by matter as being merely sense impressions. Certainly, this would be an exercise in futility,<sup>505</sup> despite Baillie's seeming penchant for epistemological skepticism.<sup>506</sup>

### **8.2.1.7 Conclusion: MI's normative epistemology: not a contribution to contemporary Christian thought**

I conclude that MI's function as a normative epistemology is not a contribution to contemporary Christian thought, as it: (1) does not adequately demonstrate how the logic of a mediated-immediate knowledge of God is internally coherent; (2) does not adequately explain how propositional "knowledge about" truths (mediated knowledge) and non-proposition "knowledge of" (immediate knowledge) are epistemologically connected; (3) does not explain with logical consistency how humans can have an immediate knowledge of other minds.

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<sup>505</sup> Indeed, in keeping with MI's appeal to empirical phenomena as partial (coherentist) ground for the mediation of knowledge of God, MI's normative epistemology would still have to validate its logic's correspondence with empirically-based evidence of a certain sort—viz., that humans generally know (or generally think that they know), *prima facie*, that they have an unconscious, immediate knowledge of God and other minds—"in, with and under" the "in, with and under" of their human experience. Accordingly, such an externalist tact would demand of MI's logic empirical that remotely suggests that humans possess: infinite, second-order, mediated "in, with and under" truths whose infinite discursive "knowledges about" derive from infinite, first-order, "in, with and under" immediate realities, whose infinite "knowledges of" are mediated by human's immediate knowledge of Reality—as mediated, "in, with and under", human experience.

<sup>506</sup> Cf. Professor Newland's remark: "There are [in Baillie's thought] indeed certainties, in the natural sciences, in moral and especially in our religious conviction. A distinction is drawn between knowledge of truth and knowledge of reality. Our knowledge of the realities is primary, and our knowledge of truths concerning them secondary. This is a neat way of affirming apposition which I have described elsewhere as a combination of ontological realism and epistemological skepticism." Newlands, "The Sense of the Presence of God", p. 156. Perhaps, however, this argument could be reconciled somewhat with string theory?



My conclusion corroborates the widely held, and now strongly substantiated, position that MI's normative epistemology, its other-minds analogy in particular, is logically defeated by MI's seemingly self-contradictory logic.

### **8.2.2. MI's Descriptive-Epistemological Functions: their Logic of Immediacy Evaluated**

We are now in a position to evaluate MI's three descriptive-epistemological functions: (2) MI's description of divine action, (3) MI's description of revelation, (4) and MI's description of CRE. In light of the previous analysis of MI's normative epistemology, functions (2) and (3) can be evaluated immediately and succinctly,

#### **8.2.2.1 Conclusion: MI's descriptive epistemologies of divine action and revelation: not contributions to contemporary Christian thought**

MI's epistemology describes (2) God's divine action "in, with, and under" the corporeal world, and describes (3) how humans come to a knowledge of God (i.e., revelation) "in, with and under" the corporeal world. Neither function describes religious experience per se; rather, each primarily describes the *divine action* which is epistemologically necessary for veridical "knowledge of" Jesus Christ: without divine action, there is no faith; without faith, there is no Christian revelation; without Christian revelation, there is no CRE. Accordingly, MI's logic underwrites Baillie's descriptions of divine action and revelation: each description presupposes that humans have an immediate knowledge of God that is mediated by various media and can be described cogently. As Klinefelter has rightly maintained, "Mediated immediacy is the cornerstone of Baillie's epistemology of religion and it is crucial for his doctrine of revelation".<sup>507</sup>

We have just found MI's normative epistemology to be logically inconsistent in at least two respects: (1) MI's internal logic of mediation and immediacy is not logically self-consistent (cf. POI, mode of apprehension); (2) MI's description of the human mind's immediate knowledge of objects and persons external to the human mind is problematic, particularly description of the mediation of divine action and revelation (i.e., knowledge of God) across history (e.g., by knowledge of other minds, including Jesus).

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<sup>507</sup> Klinefelter, "Our Knowledge of God", p. 409.

On the strength of that analysis, I conclude that two of MI's descriptive functions—a description of divine action; a description of revelation—are not promising contributions to contemporary Christian thought. This research supports Fergusson's claim that Baillie's "theological weakness" is Baillie's ambiguity about the mediation of divine revelation. It also instances Fergusson's contention that Baillie offers somewhat "disjointed" arguments in *OKG*.

This leaves us with MI's final function, its description of CRE.

### **8.3. MI'S PROMISE FOR CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIAN THOUGHT: UNDERESTIMATED**

Although MI's critics have rightly considered MI's first three functions as being of little-to-no relevance for contemporary Christian thought, they have falsely maintained that MI is not a promising contribution to contemporary Christian thought. In so doing, they have also overlooked MI's function as a description of CRE. In this final section of the thesis, I will argue that MI's descriptive epistemology of CRE is a promising contribution to contemporary Christian thought.

#### **8.3.1. Evaluating MI's Description of CRE: Preliminary Considerations**

##### **8.3.1.1 Consideration #1: MI's epistemology is theoretically not revelation-based**

When MI functions as a description of a specifically CRE, it is describing an experience in which one is putting one's faith (trust) in Jesus Christ. Such an experience includes the moment when, in an act of faith, one initially "comes to Christ". It also includes subsequent seemingly moments in which one, believing to have revelation from God, places additional faith in Jesus Christ. MI's epistemology describes such moments as ones mediated by epistemologically necessary discursive knowledge—namely, knowledge about Jesus Christ. This mediating knowledge is epistemologically necessary, because Christian knowledge of God requires, according to MI's epistemology, immediate knowledge of God in Jesus Christ.

Although CRE is mediated by discursive knowledge about Jesus, that knowledge is not adequate for a moment(s) to qualify as CRE. That such mediating knowledge is not an end in itself, comes out in Baillie's remark that the Christian's immediate knowledge

of God entails a "placing [of] our complete reliance on God—Father, Son and Holy Spirit, committing ourselves wholly to his care, nowise doubting that he will betray our commitment."<sup>508</sup> Religious experience, then, requires faith, which is "essentially trust",<sup>509</sup> in God whom one knows personally; and, in the instance, of a specifically Christian knowledge of God, trust in the Mediator, Jesus Christ, whom one knows, with the help of the Holy Spirit, immediately. In sum,

CRE is a personal knowledge of, and trust in, Jesus Christ, occasioned by mediated (propositional) and immediate (supra-propositional) knowledge, and authenticated by an immediate (non-logically demonstrable) "psychological certitude".<sup>510</sup>

MI's descriptive epistemology of CRE presupposes that humans do have veridical knowledge of God, including knowledge of God's being in Jesus Christ. This is because MI's epistemology is a critical-realist epistemology ultimately underwritten by Baillie's critical-realist theological-epistemology of revelation. Accordingly, we have found that MI's function as a descriptive epistemology of revelation does presuppose that humans do have immediate knowledge of God: faith in God (i.e., religious experience<sup>511</sup>) is mediated by immediate veridical knowledge of "ourselves, our fellows, the corporeal world, and God".<sup>512</sup> Such mediated-immediate knowledge of Reality extends to universal knowledge about God (moral consciousness of value), the possibility of universal knowledge of God (universal trust in God—i.e., a universal religious experience—i.e., universal religious consciousness), and to a universal Christian faith in God (i.e., universal Christian religious consciousness—i.e., universal CRE—i.e., CRE). *Summa Summarum*: all knowledge "of" God is mediated by experience, though immediate, according to Baillie's theological-epistemology of religion.

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<sup>508</sup> *SPG*, p. 258.

<sup>509</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>510</sup> *SPG*, pp. 64-66, *passim*.

<sup>511</sup> "The proper name of religious experience is faith." *Ibid.*, p. 64.

<sup>512</sup> *OKG*, p. 178.

Accordingly, my definition of CRE (above) reflects Baillie's conceptual overlap between his theology of revelation and his idea of religious experience. My definition of CRE is, furthermore, consistent with Baillie's thought on MI's complementary epistemological functions: one is concerned primarily with the logical necessity of revelation's theological ground for religious belief; the other is concerned primarily with the causal necessity of religious experience's psychological processes with religious belief. In addition, my definition reflects Baillie's general position, as witnessed in our trace of Baillie's MT, that divine action (i.e., MI's function as a description of Baillie's theology of divine action) and human co-action (i.e., MI's function as a description of Baillie's empirically oriented quasi-phenomenology of religious experience) are, epistemologically speaking, complementary<sup>513</sup> (i.e., MI's description of revelation), because of the work of the Holy Spirit (i.e., faith). Previous research has not spelled out these conceptual parallels, to my knowledge; however, we have observed them as-is. Moreover, we have observed that this very epistemology is presupposed by (1) Baillie's mediating-theological method; (2) Baillie's apologetic strategy; (3) Baillie's use of MT to correlate positively, at all stages of its development, a theology of revelation with a largely empirically-based description of religious experience.<sup>514</sup> MI is important for Baillie's MT.

However, we must be reminded that, for all of its critical realism, MI's function as a description of CRE *per se* does not presuppose that humans have veridical knowledge of God. Rather, when this function, one grounded primarily in Baillie's empirically-oriented reading of human experience (e.g., his own sense of God's presence, included) describes the cognitive phenomena (belief content) of a subject's experience of Jesus Christ, it describes those cognitive processes entailed what is, for the subject, a seeming Christian knowledge of God (i.e., a seeming Christian revelation)—according to

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<sup>513</sup> "What we have learned, then, is that human discovery and divine revelation, instead of dividing the field of religious knowledge between them, hold the field of it in common and are but complementary sides of the self-same act of experience. . . . What is here being asserted is that every human discovery of God or of religious truth may be regarded under the correlative aspect of divine revelation." *IOR*, p. 458. Accordingly, we have found Baillie employing MI, in an effort to correlate his theology of revelation positively with what he thinks valid from philosophical and psychological inquiries into human experience.

<sup>514</sup> What I am claiming here to be my own collection of insights, adds further force to what I have also claimed to be a research contribution: that Baillie's latter MT evidences a stronger doctrine of the Holy Spirit than is apparent in his early MT. See Chapter 5.

the subject (e.g., as, per Baillie's memory, how knowledge of God seemed to come to him).

### 8.3.1.2 Consideration #2: MI's promise: two leading questions

MI's function as a descriptive epistemology of CRE is more precisely expressed when situated in my Proudfoot-indebted<sup>515</sup> definition of descriptive epistemology:

Descriptive-epistemological immediacy refers to how an emotion or experience seems to the subjects as an account of what must be assumed in order to have such an experience.

Into this framework, we can insert MI's function as a description of CRE,

MI's description of epistemological immediacy refers to how an emotion or experience [the experience of faith in Jesus Christ] seems to the subjects as an account of what must be assumed [divine revelation] in order to have such an experience,

and arrive at our definition:

MI's description of epistemological immediacy refers to how the experience of faith in Jesus Christ seems to the subjects to be revelatory.

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<sup>515</sup> My distinction between MI's descriptive-epistemological function and MI's normative-epistemological function is not unlike Proudfoot's distinction between two types of immediacy pertaining to religious experience. "Phenomenological" immediacy (what I call descriptive-epistemological immediacy) describes "how an emotion or experience seems [emphasis mine] to the subjects as an account of what must be assumed in order to have such an experience." "Theoretical" immediacy (what I call normative-epistemological immediacy) refers to how an emotion or experience is [emphasis mine] an account of what must be assumed in order to have such a religious experience. I have avoided "phenomenological immediacy", as it suggests Baillie's epistemology is a phenomenalist epistemology. I have also rejected this language, as it suggests that Baillie uses a phenomenological method. I have avoided "theoretical immediacy", as it suggests that theorizing is only involved in metaphysical speculation and/or arguments for God's existence. However, theorizing is presupposed by attempts to describe religious experience (e.g., as concerning the method best able to describe religious experience). Quotations from Wayne Proudfoot, *Religious Experience*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1985, p. 19. Cf. p. 3.

From this line of reasoning, we can derive at least two leading questions for the evaluation of the logic of MI's descriptive epistemology of CRE:

(1) Does MI's logic describe how faith in Jesus Christ "seems" to be experienced as revelation?

(2) If (1), what value does that description of CRE have for contemporary Christian thought?

### **8.3.1.3 Consideration #3: MI's core substance for evaluation**

Baillie's theology of revelation presupposes the objective existence of realities, as well as human capacity for knowledges both "about" and "of" them: (a) self-knowledge, (b) other-knowledge, (c) God-knowledge, (d) world-knowledge, and (e) Gospel-knowledge—all mediate (f) God-in-Jesus knowledge, a personal knowledge of Jesus. Without any one of these knowledges, there cannot be, according to Baillie's theology of revelation, Christian knowledge of God through "faith"—a "trust" in Jesus Christ, in whom God dwelt, as verified by a self-authenticating psychological certitude.

When we frame these knowledges, according to Baillie's thought on religious experience in general (on knowledge of God, in general), we find that Baillie's thought on religious experience (in general) maintains that religious experience: (1) describes realities (minds) known immediately by revelation; (2) involves abstracted "truths" about those realities (including the world) that can epistemologically correspond to the realities (minds, matter) that mediate knowledge of God; (3) entails both immediate knowledge of (non-discursive) and mediated knowledge about (discursive) realities (God, others, self, the world) the veridicality of whom (or which) can not be demonstrated with 100% logical certainty. Without knowledge capacities (1-3) and their individual interactions with each knowledge dimension (a-d), there cannot be, if Baillie's thought is consistent, universal knowledge of God (UKG).

When we frame these knowledges, according to Baillie's description of a specifically CRE, we find that UKG is, as is the case for religious experience in general, epistemologically necessary for a specifically CRE (i.e., requires the interaction of 1-3 x

a-d). However, CRE also requires that knowledge capacities (1-3) interact with knowledge dimension (d), for personal knowledge of Jesus (f)—the “logical center” in history to whom all the media (e) “point” (in Baillie’s words). Dimensions and interactions that mirror Baillie’s belief that reality is a gradated valuational field, MI’s normative epistemology (i.e., theology of revelation) presupposes that they are veridical; MI’s descriptive epistemology of CRE presupposes that they are, to the subject, seemingly veridical.

When we translate Baillie’s epistemology of religious experience (in general) into the language of MI; and frame it according to MI’s particularized description of CRE; we find MI maintaining, in keeping with Chapter 2’s elucidation of its logic, that this is an accurate description of CRE: “it seems to cognition” that a personal, knowledge of God-in-Jesus knowledge is characterized by the following.

MI’s Descriptive Epistemology: Core Beliefs about CRE

- (1) Mediated by propositional knowledge about Jesus Christ's live, death, and resurrection (the "old, old, story");
- (2) An immediate (non-discursive) knowledge of God;
- (3) An immediate knowledge of Jesus Christ;
- (4) An immediate knowledge of God's being in Jesus Christ;
- (5) A trust in, and volitional commitment to follow, Jesus Christ (“faith”).
- (6) A self-authenticating “psychological certitude” that God is in Christ
- (7) An event (1-6) mediated by self-knowledge, other-knowledge, world-knowledge and God-knowledge

Plainly put, this constitutes the core of the cognitive content of a person who is having a religious experience of Jesus Christ. This conceptually crystallized account (1-7) amounts to the core substance for my evaluation of MI’s promise as a contribution for contemporary Christian thought.

### **8.3.2. MI's Descriptive Epistemology of CRE Evaluated**

There are three aspects of MI whose collective ground make it a contribution to contemporary Christian thought: (1) MI corresponds to empirical data concerning the cognitive psychology of CRE; (2) MI corresponds to Christian theology about CRE; (3) MI holds promise as a concept for engaging an intellectual current.

#### **8.3.2.1 MI is superior to other models of CRE**

In assessing the degree of MI's correspondence with empirical accounts of CRE, it is helpful to situate MI within the context of options for describing CRE from an empirical perspective. Here is but one way that I can conceive of patterning the data:

(Please see next page)



“Models of Descriptive Epistemologies of CRE”

		Humans’ Epistemological Ground of Faith		
		Mediated Knowledge (propositional knowledge “about”)	Immediate Knowledge (non-propositional knowledge “of”)	Mediated-Immediate Knowledge (propositional knowledge “about” and non-propositional knowledge “of”)
Divine Action	Mediation (Bodies only)	Jesus experience: an inference from knowledge about bodies only	Jesus experience: a non-inference from knowledge of bodies only	Jesus experience: a non-inference with knowledge about and of bodies only
	Mediation (Bodies and Minds)	Jesus experience: an inference from knowledge about bodies and minds	Jesus experience: a non-inference from knowledge of bodies and minds	Jesus experience: a non-inference with knowledge about and of bodies and minds <i>(Baillie’s Concept of MI)</i>
	Immediate (No bodies; minds only)	Jesus experience: an inference from knowledge about minds only	Jesus experience: a non-inference from knowledge of Minds only	Jesus experience: a non-inference with knowledge about and of minds only

### Column 1: Its models considered

The models depicted in column one, what I am calling “mediated-mediacy” models, describe assent to CRE as being mediated by propositional knowledge about Jesus and CRE as being authenticated by propositional knowledge about Jesus. Does empirical research evidence that assent to faith in Jesus Christ seems to subjects, as a whole, to be occasioned by a logical demonstration of Jesus' being the object of faith? It is plausible that some persons have been confronted with the Gospel message, processed the information, worked out a seemingly logical demonstration of Jesus' being the object of Christian faith, and Jesus' credibility having thus been established by and grounded in a seemingly logical entailment, assented to belief in Jesus. However, surely such an assent to CRE would be an anomaly. For example, William James's thorough description and analysis of religious experience<sup>516</sup> suggests that religious conversion experiences are not grounded in logical demonstrations; rather, subjects as a whole describe religious experience as being grounded in what is a seemingly immediate knowledge of the numinous.

This tendency of persons to regard Christian conversion experiences as logically non-demonstrative experiences of God has been evidenced in the more recent research of Glock and Stark.<sup>517</sup> Examining the religious experiences of person's from the West Coast of the United States, they found that the “confirming experience” which substantiated a religious experience's authenticity was for subjects, as a whole, “a sudden feeling, knowing, or intuition that the beliefs that one holds are true.” Specifically, subjects' descriptions for the verification of their religious experience tended along two lines: a “generalized sense of sacredness” and a “specific awareness of the presence of divinity.” Their research indicates that over 40 percent of their sample interpreted their religious experiences as involving “a feeling that [they] were somehow in the presence of God.”<sup>518</sup> The findings of Glock et al. suggest, then, that a more subjective experience, and not a logical demonstration, is the primary factor for the triggering of religious experience.

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<sup>516</sup> See *Varieties*, Lectures IX-X.

<sup>517</sup> C.Y. Glock and R. Stark, *Religion and Society in Tension*, Chicago: Rand McNally, 1964. In Margaret M. Poloma, “The Sociological Context of Religious Experience”, p. 169, as cited in Hood, *Handbook of Religious Experience*, pp. 161-182.

<sup>518</sup> Glock and Stark, *ibid.*

The research of Glock et al. corroborate research data which indicates that cognition tends to be marginalized, in favor of emotion, in instances of religious conversion. An excellent example is Hood's analysis of language's effects on religious experience. Acknowledging the importance of discursive reasoning for the mediation of religious experience, Christian and otherwise, Hood also makes the point that religious experience nonetheless seems to many to be irreducible to language.

1) It [language] can facilitate awareness of foundational realities, including being a factor in the phenomenological description of the experience; 2) it can provide the necessary mediation by which experience becomes reflexively conscious; 3) it can facilitate the report of experiences within what Wittgenstein would call a particular language game; 4) it can lead one to reject experiences as legitimate religious ones. In each of these ways, language plays a crucial role in religious experience, but not one that can carry the weight of constituting the experience.<sup>519</sup>

Accordingly, Lee's examination of Christian and non-Christian forms of religious experience lead to the conclusion that:

In the final analysis, God in his many manifestations is primarily to be experienced, rather than to be defined. Indeed, all major religions ranging from Hinduism to Catholicism regard the mystic as the pinnacle of religious achievement—and the mystic is the one who has the most frequent and intense religious experiences [emphasis mine].<sup>520</sup>

Empirical psychological research, then, evidences, that subjects tend to think that immediate knowledge substantiates the veridicality of CRE. Consequently, the models

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<sup>519</sup>Ralph W. Hood Jr., "The Facilitation of Religious Experience", p. 577. In Hood, *Handbook of Religious Experience*, pp. 568-599.

<sup>520</sup>James Michael Lee, "Religious Instruction and Religious Experience", *ibid.* p. 547.

under column one are ruled out as accurate descriptions of the experience of faith in Jesus Christ.

#### Column 2: Its Models Considered

The models depicted in column two, which I am calling “immediate-immediacy” models, describe assent to CRE as being mediated by only immediate of Jesus and CRE as being authenticated by or grounded in immediate knowledge of Jesus.

Unlike those models depicted in column one, column two's models describe CRE as an event grounded in immediate knowledge: knowledge of Jesus is knowledge authenticated not by discursive reasoning, but established rather by faith's immediate knowledge of Jesus. Specifically, it describes persons' assent to CRE as one mediated *only* by immediate knowledge, be that immediate knowledge of minds or bodies or both. It seems reasonable to think that when persons place faith (*fiducia*) in Jesus, while most believe that the veridicality of knowledge of Jesus Christ is ultimately an immediate knowledge, the same yet generally presuppose that CRE is mediated by at least some propositional knowledge about Jesus Christ—that Jesus existed, that knowledge of Jesus is tied to one's salvation, for example. If so, then models of this type must be rejected on empirical ground as accurate descriptions of CRE.

#### Column 3: Its Models Considered

The models depicted in column one, mediated-immediacy models, describe assent to CRE as mediated by propositional knowledge about Jesus and CRE as authenticated by immediate knowledge about Jesus. These are mediated-immediacy models.

The first particular model under the mediated-immediate column describes assent to faith in Jesus as mediated by both knowledge about (propositional), and mediated by immediate knowledge of (non-propositional), bodies only. While this model correctly describes CRE as being grounded in immediate knowledge; that its description of the cognition of CRE makes the body the terminus of subjects' immediate knowledge—assent to CRE is mediated by, and the veridicality of CRE, established by, mediated knowledge about and immediate knowledge of bodies only—squarely contradicts the empirical data pertaining to descriptions of the immediacy of CRE: on the whole,

subjects describe CRE as being mediated by immediate knowledge of the mind of Christ; and as being grounded ultimately in what also seems to be an immediate knowledge of God.

The third particular model under the mediated-immediate column describes assent to faith in Jesus as mediated by both knowledge about (propositional), and mediated by immediate knowledge of (non-propositional), minds only. While this model does also rightly describes CRE as being grounded in immediately knowledge; when it limits subjects' knowledge to knowledge of the mind—assent to CRE is mediated by, and the veridicality of CRE, established by, mediated knowledge about and immediate knowledge of minds only—it too advances a model of CRE whose description of persons' cognitive state during CRE fails to correspond with research pertaining to CRE: the psychology of CRE indicates that subjects generally believe that veridical knowledge about bodies have mediated and continue to mediate their concrete experiences of Jesus Christ, their religious conversion experience included.<sup>521</sup>

### Column 3: Baillie's Model of Mediated Immediacy Briefly Reconsidered

#### MI's description of the immediacy of CRE

MI, when functioning as a descriptive epistemology of CRE, clearly describes the cognition involved in assent to faith in Jesus Christ—i.e., CRE—as being not being a matter of logical demonstration. Likewise, it grounds CRE in what subjects perceive to be an immediate subjective verification of knowledge of God in Jesus. In this regard, it rightly describes the immediacy involved in CRE. It is as such superior to the other models of mediated immediacy discussed.

MI's description of the mediation of such supposedly immediate knowledge is, however, plausibly problematic, based on what has been found to be a seemingly muddled description of the epistemological correlate of religious experience: the divine

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<sup>521</sup> See, for example, William P. Alston, *Perceiving God: The Epistemology of Religious Experience*. Cornell University Press, 1991. Alston's general theory of doxastic practices argues that religious beliefs are formed in a belief forming framework or context in which there are interlocking sources of authority. This framework, not unlike those that influences other claims based on sensory perception (for instance, empirical science's claims, includes back ground assumptions, belief forming mechanisms, and the not always logically demonstrable criteria that we routinely presume to justify believed truths about the world and others.

action which, engaging the subject, gives rise to CRE—this when subjects apprehend it and, by faith (immediate knowledge), appropriate it. As MI's function as a description of divine action is muddled, it seems prudent to flesh out briefly what that functions suggests—though preferably would have described more lucidly and cogently—about the cognitive psychology involved in assent to CRE, subjects' beliefs about the knowledge's which mediate CRE, in particular. This will enable us to understand better and to evaluate more judiciously MI's thus far otherwise accurate rendering of the cognitive psychology of CRE.

#### MI's description of the mediation involved in CRE

If, then, MI describes well the immediacy of CRE, in that its description corresponds in general with empirical data pertaining to the immediacy and subjectivity of CRE, does it also describe faithfully the thoughts and feelings that tend to mediate persons' believed experiences of Jesus? More specifically, would its problematic logic appear to suggest, if also fail to persuade, that CRE is mediated by cognition that involves logical demonstration(s), illogical reasoning, or, perhaps, reasoning that leads to paradox?

If MI describes CRE as being mediated by a (seemingly) logical demonstration of Jesus Christ's being the subject of Christian faith, then it would describe faith's immediate knowledge of Jesus (CRE) as entailing no logical paradox. MI obviously rejects logical demonstration as the *modus operandi* for the mediation of CRE, while yet describing assent to CRE as mediated by what subjects believe are truths about Jesus. Consequently, if subjects' knowledge about gospel truths are said to mediate CRE, though do not provide immediate knowledge of Jesus (faith); then, inasmuch as Christian faith (CRE) is a decision-based act—one precipitated by (i.e., mediated by) discursive reasoning—one can infer that MI describes the immediate knowledge of (faith in) Jesus Christ that marks the transition to CRE proper as being mediated by discursive reasoning that is either: (1) illogical or (2) paradoxical. Possible also is that it describes the moment of assent to faith in Jesus CRE as one (3) devoid of any apparent ratiocination at all (e.g., a subconscious assent). I have already argued against the tenability of this third option in

this chapter context. This leaves options (1-2) as explanations for MI's description of the cognition involved in the mediation of CRE.

Option (1)—MI describes assent to CRE as being mediated by persons' contemplation of the illogical—is ruled out on the ground that nowhere in Baillie's thought does he maintain that assent to Christian faith is essentially assent to the Logically Self-Contradictory. Accordingly, not one of Baillie's critics has interpreted Baillie as contending for that, even when, as we have found, his critics have maintained that MI proves itself to be, upon scrutiny, logically self-contradictory. This leaves open option (2)—MI describes CRE as being mediated by knowledge about (mediated or propositional knowledge) and knowledge of (immediate or non-propositional knowledge) a paradox.

Although the logic of Baillie's theological epistemological of revelation fails to persuade—viz., as concerning the epistemological linkage between general revelation and special revelation—and, accordingly, MI's function as a description of revelation fails to persuade, if only for its seemingly self-contradictory Theo-logic; it is my position that MI's function as a descriptive epistemology of CRE is not, by extension, necessarily logically contradictory. Indeed, while MI's other functions suffer a seeming inability to convey coherently those processes by which various loci mediate divine action and revelation, when MI describes CRE, it describes CRE in narrower and more mentalistic terms, and then describes the epistemological junction between faith and reason as being paradoxical. This is to say that MI's description of CRE is a description of what *appears* to be, from the subject's perspective, a knowledge (faith) the apprehension and appropriation of which is mediated by both propositional knowledge about ("truths", in Baillie's language) and immediate knowledge of God's being in Jesus ("realities", in Baillie's language)—knowledges whose logics are *believed* not to contradict each other, but believed, by faith, rather to compliment each other.

"Jesus Christ is the Paradox to whom I shall give my intellectual assent; in whom I shall trust; to whom I shall give my life and fullest allegiance"—that perhaps is what Baillie would have MI describe plainly, had the mediating theologian, perennially given as he was to intellectual currents psychological, explicated in detail the psychology of

humans' encounter with the Mediator—a psychology which he attempted to correlate with his theology of revelation.

Regardless, I think it apparent that MI's description of CRE approximates something like a philosophy of the cognitive psychology of what is thought to be the paradoxical quality of Christian faith—this when, relatively speaking, it is stripped from its theological suppositions, in keeping with Baillie's effort to correlate his theology with a more empirically-based description of how humans appear to encounter Jesus in human experience. Indeed, save Baillie's description of the mediation of knowledge of God's being in Jesus, when Baillie speaks explicitly of the “paradox” that is MI's logic this too evidences Baillie's affinity for paradox as a description of MI's logic. Additionally, Baillie's speaks of an affinity for the treatment of Christian faith provided by the “genius” Kierkegaard. While Kierkegaard's language about assent to CRE would likely strike Baillie as a bit extreme for its seeming emphasis on logical contradiction—Christian faith in Jesus is an assent to the Christian Absurd—Baillie would have no difficulty with Kierkegaard's epistemological position that faith is neither an assent nor an allegiance to an entirely Logically Self-contradictory whose grace and salvific effects are verified by illogic. Rather, Baillie would concur with Kierkegaard that faith in the Absolute Paradox, while subjective, is nonetheless not grounded ultimately in logical contradiction.<sup>522</sup>

There is, then, already reason to think that Baillie's model of MI is superior to the competing models or CRE, in that it correctly describes CRE as being occasioned by and grounded in what seems to subjects to be immediate knowledge. I have also advanced the position that Baillie's model of MI describes CRE as being paradoxical. What remains to

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<sup>522</sup> For a lucid analysis of Kierkegaard's thought on this issue, see Steven M. Emmanuel, *Kierkegaard and the Concept of Revelation*, Albany, NY: State University of New York Press, 1996, esp. Chap. 3 (“Reason, Faith, and Revelation”), pp. 39-60. Cf. Stephen C. Evans, “Is Kierkegaard an Irrationalist? Reason, Paradox, and Faith”, *Religious Studies*, 25, 1989, pp. 347-62. In addition, while I do not rest my interpretation of MI upon correlations between Baillie's psychology of the paradoxical nature of CRE and Kierkegaard's theology of paradox; and I am certainly not maintaining that Baillie's MT is an existential theology—promising as that research line may be; it is interesting to note that, when viewed from the perspective of the Incarnation, the idea of faith in the Paradox has been maintained by John Baillie's brother, Donald. See D. M. Baillie, *God Was in Christ: The historical Jesus and the message of Christ woven into the doctrines of the Incarnation and Atonement*, New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1948. See also George B. Hall, “D.M. Baillie: A Theology of Paradox”, pp. 65-86, in Fergusson's *Christ, Church and Society* for an informative elucidation of types of theological paradox, and his application of them to his interpretation of the logic of Donald Baillie's Christology.



be seen is the extent to which Baillie's model of MI is a contribution to contemporary Christian thought. This assessment requires that MI meet at least three criteria: (1) that it generally corresponds to the empirical psychology of CRE; (2) that it affirms chief Christian tenants about CRE; (3) that it has utility for contemporary Christian thought.

### 8.3.2.2 MI corresponds to the cognitive psychology of CRE

As the above chart indicates, MI describes the experience of Jesus (CRE) as being assent to a non-inference accompanied by knowledge about, and of, bodies and minds. Put differently, MI asserts that persons who have a CRE believe that they have propositional knowledge about, and personal knowledge of minds and bodies, believing that such knowledge mediates assent to faith in Jesus Christ. These aspects of mediation of personal knowledge of Jesus refer to points (1) and (7) from the list of the core beliefs espoused by MI's descriptive epistemology of CRE.

#### "MI's Descriptive Epistemology of CRE: Core Assertions"

- (1) Mediated by propositional knowledge about Jesus Christ's live, death, and resurrection (the "old, old, story");
- (2) An immediate (non-discursive) knowledge of God;
- (3) An immediate knowledge of Jesus Christ;
- (4) An immediate knowledge of God being in Jesus Christ;
- (5) A trust in, and volitional commitment to follow, Jesus Christ ("faith").
- (6) A self-authenticating "psychological certitude" that God is in Christ
- (7) An event (1-6) mediated by self-knowledge, other-knowledge, world-knowledge and God-knowledge;

In addition, MI's descriptive epistemology presupposes that subject S thinks S's CRE neither logically demonstrable, nor paradoxical, nor contingent upon seeing Jesus' body.<sup>523</sup> Does the research describe assent to faith in Jesus as mediated by (1) and (7)?

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<sup>523</sup> Although, see, e.g., Lecture III of William James, *The Varieties of Religious Experience*. New York : Longmans, Green & Co., 1902.

### 8.3.2.3 MI endorses a revelation-based Christian theology of CRE

MI's description of CRE mirrors Baillie's theology of revelation in that it describes CRE as a seemingly mediated and immediate knowledge. Inasmuch as a Christian theology of revelation should conceive of knowledge of God as being both a mediated and immediate knowledge of Personality, then MI's description of CRE is a contribution to contemporary Christian thought, in that it safeguards against those models of CRE which would, perhaps in service to an argument for God's existence, endorse a God either excessively immanent or excessively transcendent in terms of God's relationship to humankind.

Should Christian theology conceive of a God who is immediately known in a manner that bypasses all human cognition (i.e., mediated knowledge)? While Baillie's theology of revelation remains open to the charge of minimizing the cognitive content involved in the mediation of divine revelation—MI's normative epistemology has been shown to suffer a seeming breakdown in its logic in this regard—MI's description of CRE, like MI's descriptions of divine action and revelation, contends that knowledge of God, be it actual or seeming, is always mediated by human cognition: by knowledge about the world, oneself, others, what one knows about Jesus, and historical events. This seems to me the right course of action for Christian thought.

Nowhere in the New Testament will one find an idea of CRE whose epistemology amounts to faith in a God the seeming knowledge of Whom bypasses all human cognition. One does find, however, multiple examples of persons placing faith in a Jesus Christ who meets them in them in their concrete situations, either in body and/or in spirit, to deepen their walk with God. In these instances, one does not find a Jesus effectively asking persons to surrender their cognitive faculties. To the contrary, Jesus, engaging such persons in their concrete circumstance, speaks to persons in a language that they can understand and, in so doing, engages their background knowledge and, as the psychologists would say, cognitive schemas, in the personal encounter. Such persons include the one who would become the greatest of the Christian missionaries, Saul of Tarsus. When, for instance, Saul, soon-to-be Paul, encounters Jesus on the road to Damascus, Jesus, according to what we take to be Paul's description of Paul's CRE,

speaks to Paul and appeals to Paul's thought.<sup>524</sup> The same goes with Jesus' discussion with Simon Peter on the coasts of Caesarea Philippi: an occasion which assuredly strengthened a person's faith in Jesus,<sup>525</sup> it was precipitated by Jesus' inquiry also into a concrete situation—namely, what the religious community was saying about the identity of Jesus. Accordingly, when Jesus utters parables, albeit parables whose deep truths<sup>526</sup> are not meant to be understood by all persons,<sup>527</sup> Jesus uses concrete examples which appeal to listeners' cognitive set—cloth, wine, a fig tree, a mustard seed, a pearl, a fishing net, sheep, goats, for example—to mediate deep secrets of God. While these isolated parable-telling instances may not have given rise to a religious experience along the lines of say a religious conversion, that Jesus gave them with the hope that these stories would deepen his followers' faith in and walk with God seems apparent.

One danger of a model of CRE whose epistemology bypasses the mediation of knowledge of God by knowledge about objects is it can promote an unduly immanentist account of God's presence—one that, for emphasis on the epistemic accessibility of an always immediately known God, blurs the Creator-creature distinction fundamental to the Christian tradition's ontology. MI's description of CRE militates against this move toward pantheism: it maintains that CRE is never a direct knowledge of God, but one that is always mediated by (comes "in, with, and under") the material order and human knowledge about it.

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<sup>524</sup> "And as he journeyed, he came near Damascus: and suddenly there shined round about him a light from heaven: And he fell to the earth, and heard a voice saying unto him, Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? And he said, Who art thou, Lord? And the Lord said, I am Jesus whom thou persecutest: it is hard for thee to kick against the pricks. And he trembling and astonished said, Lord, what wilt thou have me to do? And the Lord said unto him, Arise, and go into the city, and it shall be told thee what thou must do. And the men which journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice, but seeing no man. And Saul arose from the earth; and when his eyes were opened, he saw no man: but they led him by the hand, and brought him into Damascus. And he was three days without sight, and neither did eat nor drink." Acts 9: 3-9, KJV.

<sup>525</sup> <sup>13</sup> "When Jesus came into the coasts of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, saying, Whom do men say that I the Son of man am? And they said, Some say that thou art John the Baptist: some, Elias; and others, Jeremias, or one of the prophets. He saith unto them, But whom say ye that I am? And Simon Peter answered and said, Thou art the Christ, the Son of the living God. And Jesus answered and said unto him, Blessed art thou, Simon Barjona: for flesh and blood hath not revealed it unto thee, but my Father which is in heaven." Matt. 16:13, KJV.

<sup>526</sup> "All these things spake Jesus unto the multitude in parables; and without a parable spake he not unto them: That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying, I will open my mouth in parables; I will utter things which have been kept secret from the foundation of the world." Matt 13:34-35, referencing Psalm 78:2, KJV.

<sup>527</sup> "And the disciples came, and said unto him, Why speakest thou unto them in parables? He answered and said unto them, Because it is given unto you to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given." Matt. 13:10-11.

When MI describes CRE as mediated by knowledge about the material world, it also safeguards a major teaching for a Christian theology of revelation, inasmuch as that theology of revelation is to be at least consistent with Bible stories: that there is no direct knowledge of God. Nowhere in either the Old Testament or the New Testament is there mention of a revelatory event in which God is seen directly. There are however, multiple accounts of divine disclosure being mediated by media—by things, beings and/or human cognition about things and beings—by human bodies, angels, visions, bushes, thunder, lightening, pillars of cloud and fire. Accordingly, MI’s epistemology affirms the orthodox Judeo-Christian teaching that no human can see God in God’s full glory.<sup>528</sup> As such, MI’s descriptive epistemology of CRE militates against what amounts to idolatry for the Christian tradition: pantheism.

#### **8.3.2.4 MI has apologetic value for engaging non-supernaturalist accounts of religious experience**

Postmodern thought continues to be one of the most pressing challenges for Christian theism. Although its proponents and teachings are diverse, the postmodernism that underwrites the contemporary culture and ethos that is postmodernity is one that gravitates toward certain core beliefs. Grenz expounds these beliefs in “A Primer on Postmodernism.”<sup>529</sup> His exposition can be summarized as follows.

##### The Postmodern Ethos: A Rejection of the Following Modernist Beliefs (Grenz, 1996)

- (1) Belief in objectivism, in favor of relativism;
- (2) Belief that truth is what is rational, in favor of subjective experience and pragmatism;
- (3) Belief that the scientific method discovers truth, in favor of a more holistic and experiential approach to knowledge;
- (4) Belief that knowledge can be totalized, in favor of knowledge being non-totalizable;
- (5) Belief that truth can come from epistemological individualism, in favor of truth as the byproduct of communal relations and consensus;
- (6) Belief in a logocentric emphasis for knowing, in favor of multiple ways of knowing;

<sup>528</sup> Exodus 33:20.

<sup>529</sup> Stanley J. Grenz, *A Primer on Postmodernism*. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1996.

- (7) Belief that knowledge is best attained from personal disinterest, in favor of a participatory model for knowing;
- (8) Belief in modernist Euro-American centrism, in favor of a multi-cultural approach toward knowledge and values;
- (9) Belief in the inherent goodness of knowledge, in favor of the moral neutrality of knowledge.<sup>530</sup>

Each of the above-indicated beliefs reflects postmodernism's rejection of the "meta-narrative" (all-encompassing explanation of reality), epistemic foundationalism (there are self-justifying basic beliefs), and the representationalist theory of language (that language objectively mirrors objectively known objects).

Postmodern thought, then, is not inclined to endorse some trans-historical, objective Truth the veridicality of which (or Whom) is guaranteed by revelation (e.g., theology) or logical demonstration (e.g., science, philosophy). Accordingly, it rejects, in principal, an Absolute Value that should apply categorically to all individuals. Undergirding this ethical relativism is the logic that worldviews are, mediated by the "textuality" of, to borrow from Perry,<sup>531</sup> our ego-centric predicament. This includes, though hardly exhausts, the impact of information provided by our personal histories, cultures and language constructs on our worldviews. The thought is that mediation logically negates the immediacy required for such a pure experience. As Vanhoozer remarks,

To assert 'there is nothing outside textuality' is to deny the possibility of ever achieving immediacy, philosophy's longed-for encounter with pure 'presence' uncontaminated by difference, an unmediated, nonlinguistic encounter with what lies outside language.<sup>532</sup>

<sup>530</sup>*Ibid.* See esp. Ch's 2 & 3, pp. 11-56.

<sup>531</sup>Ralph Barton Perry. "The ego-centric predicament." *The Journal of Philosophy, Psychology and Scientific Methods*, 1910, pp. 5-14.

<sup>532</sup>Kevin J. Vanhoozer, "Scripture and Tradition", p. 157. In *The Cambridge Companion to Postmodern Theology*, Kevin J. Vanhoozer, ed., Cambridge University Press, 2003, pp. 149-69.

Accordingly, the postmodern tendency is to look to culture-specific truths and to assess their credibility. This evaluation typically includes an assessment to which beliefs correspond with the shared subjective empirical experience of the localized community as a whole. It also typically includes an assessment of the utility value of those beliefs for the community.

This raises, for Grenz, the question of how the Christian tradition might effectively share the Gospel with postmodernity. Grenz, following his analysis of postmodern thought and culture, provides four guidelines or prescriptions for how he thinks the Gospel can speak effectively to the “postmodern situation”.

#### Four Characteristics of a “Postmodern Gospel” (Grenz, 1996)

(1) Post-Individualistic. “We must affirm with postmodern thinkers that knowledge—including knowledge of God—is not merely objective, not simply discovered by the neutral knowing self.... Here we can learn from the contemporary communitarian scholars [who].... affirm that the community is essential in the process of knowing. Individuals come to knowledge only by way of a cognitive framework mediated by the community in which they participate... The community mediates to its members a transcendent story that includes traditions of virtue, common good and ultimate meaning [emphasis mine].”<sup>533</sup> [cf. Baillie’s autobiographical basis for MI; cf. MI’s emphasis on the four knowledge’s interrelatedness in knowing.]

(2) Post-rationalistic. “We must make room for the concept of ‘mystery’—not as an irrational complement to the rational but as a reminder that the fundamental reality of God transcends human rationality [cf. MI as immediate knowledge]..... At the heart of being a Christian is a personal encounter with God in Christ that shapes and molds us... It is in the context of making sense out of life by means of recounting the story of a transformative religious experience [cf. MI as CRE] that doctrinal propositions find their importance.... Propositions can thus be said to have second-order importance. [cf. MI’s presuppositions on knowledge of first-order realities vs. knowledge about second-order

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<sup>533</sup>*Primer on Postmodernism*, p. 168.

truths] They both serve conversion experience [i.e., mediate it] and arise out of our new status as believers.... A postmodern articulation of the gospel... no longer focuses as on propositions [but rather experience] as the central content of Christian faith.”<sup>534</sup>

[emphases mine]

(3) Post-dualistic. “The next generation is increasingly interested in the human person as a unified whole. The gospel we proclaim must speak to human beings in their entirety... It involves integrating the emotional-affective, as well as the bodily-sensual, within one human person.... [It] must also put the human person back into the social and environment context that forms and nourishes us.... Our anthropology must take seriously that our identity includes being in a relationship with nature [cf. MI as world-knowledge] , being in a relationship with others [cf. MI as other-knowledge], being in a relationship with God [cf. MI as God-knowledge] , and, as a consequence being in a true relationship with ourselves [cf. MI as self-knowledge]. All the emphases are evident in the ministry of our Lord [emphasis mine]...”<sup>535</sup>

(4) Post-Noeticentric Gospel. “Our gospel must affirm that the goal of our existence encompasses more than just the accumulation of knowledge. We must declare that the purpose of correct doctrine is to serve the attainment of wisdom.... Knowledge is good only when it facilitates a good result—specifically, when it fosters wisdom (or spirituality) in a knower.... To this end, a post-noeticentric gospel fosters a proper ordering of activism and quietism... The postmodern ethos correctly understands that activism must arise from inner resources. The postmodern gospel will remind us that we will be able to sustain right action only when it flows from the resources of the Holy Spirit.... As Christians, then, we should be concerned to gain knowledge and to hold correct doctrine in order that we might attain wisdom for living so that we might please God with our lives.”<sup>536</sup>

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<sup>534</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 171.

<sup>535</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 171-72.

<sup>536</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 172-73.

Grenz's theological emphasis is on how to share the Gospel message in the postmodern situation, and his method is confessionalist in orientation. Although that theological approach is not the primary concern of this thesis, Grenz does avail important points of contact with postmodernity for the academic theologian who would engage postmodern thought on the issue of, to use Grenz's language, "transformative religious experience". Indeed, it is the profound religious experience, and not so much religious doctrine, that this now not-so "new generation" seeks. Postmodernity's experience-seeking inclination reflects postmodernity's typically anti-objectivist ontology, typically anti-logocentric epistemology, and, accordingly, the tendency to enthrone subjective experience as the means and verification of knowing. It also reflects the postmodern preference for shared subjective experiences of community as normative for spiritual growth.

*Does MI's description of CRE, then, overlap with beliefs central to the postmodern ethos? When we compare MI's core beliefs with postmodernity's core beliefs, we observe the following points of agreement.*

#### Shared Emphases between MI's description of CRE and the Postmodern Ethos

- (1) A rejection of logic as the final arbiter of truth
- (2) There are multiple ways of knowing
- (3) The authority and subjective certitude of life-transforming experiences
- (4) The necessity of personal communal relations for the mediation of knowledge of supreme value
- (5) A rejection of the belief that knowledge can be totalized by any human enterprise
- (6) A rejection of the belief that all knowledge is inherently good
- (7) A rejection of the belief that knowledge attainment is the proper end for humans

MI's and postmodernity's mutual affirmation of these beliefs is discussed in detail in the following section.

*Does MI's description of CRE emphasize what Grenz's four criteria for postmodern gospel emphasize? It does, in each instance. I have just noted these shared emphases and conceptual overlaps (via bracketed insertion and underlined emphasis), in passages that*



outline the four criteria. The concepts noted are central to MI, have been discussed throughout the thesis, and need not be repeated here.

The only criterion in need of consideration, then, is the fourth or “post-noetic” criterion, including the extent to which MI meets it. Grenz’s position on this criterion is that Christian theology should reject knowledge as the *telos* of knowledge acquisition, and contend rather that knowledge should facilitate “spirituality” (equated with “wisdom”)—a spirituality characterized by wisdom, governed by the Holy Spirit, and one which aims to “please God”.

Grenz’s prescription for Christian thought’s engagement with postmodernity is not without difficulties. For one, Grenz is ambiguous about what he means by “spirituality” and “wisdom”. Secondly, I would also reject what he appears to be contending about the *telos* of knowledge acquisition.<sup>537</sup> Nevertheless, when he rightly maintains that Christian theology’s engagement with postmodernity should emphasize that “spirituality” and “wisdom” derive from the Holy Spirit, he espouses, if again somewhat vaguely, an epistemology with which MI’s epistemology is all too familiar. For we have found, for example, that MI’s epistemology maintains that the Holy Spirit mediates assent to CRE (cf., postmodern “spirituality”), by providing a “paradoxically” logical connection (cf., postmodern subjectivity) between our knowledge about second-order truths about God’s divine action, and our immediate knowledge of God; and that this epistemological connection is evidenced by the Holy Spirit’s illumination of the human mind with at least three types of immediacy: (1) an immediate perception (cf. a “sense” of God’s presence; faith as a “mode of apprehension”) of God’s having been directly present in Jesus Christ—this despite God’s self-disclosure being indirect—mediated by a veiled form (flesh); (2) an immediate trust in God, as Self-disclosed in Jesus Christ: “faith” the veridicality of whose evidence is ultimately irreducible to sensory perception (that which is seen); and, (3) an immediate confirmation—a

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<sup>537</sup> Grenz appears to advocate a theological method that would emphasize that the *telos* of the Christian walk is “to please God”. What are the problems with this position? For one, it suggests that God is not pleased with God’s creation. Secondly, it suggests that good works might steer God around on the matter. Thirdly, it suggests that God would somehow be incomplete, were God not pleased by the actions of God’s creation—that God’s aseity is not enough for God—that God’s Self-actualization is contingent upon human action. I would prefer to emphasize God’s love for creation and to conceive of the *telos* of knowledge acquisition as loving, and not aiming ultimately to please, God and one’s neighbor.

“psychological certitude” by (direct acquaintance), of knowledge of God and of Jesus’ as the Subject of Christian faith (*contra* confirmation by indirect knowledge—namely, knowledge about God from a “highest inference”).<sup>538</sup> Inasmuch as postmodernity emphasizes “spirituality” as a way of knowing, existing, and finding value and direction in life, MI’s description of CRE is a promising means for Christian thought’s dialogue with postmodernity: MI’s epistemology emphasizes spirituality—a Holy Spirituality.

MI’s description of CRE also emphasizes, with postmodernity, that religious experience, like human experience in general, does not end with one particularly profound transformational moment; rather, religious experience is an ongoing transformative experience. Accordingly, MI’s epistemology does not conceive of a spiritual experience as one characterized by a moment of dispassionate thought; rather, MI description of CRE conceives of what is a seemingly “revelatory” moment(s)—one(s) that initiates a worldview shift initially, but which demands ongoing reflection, existential commitment (i.e., praxis), and spirituality characterized by openness (faith) to further (seeming) revelation. Here too is a point of contact with postmodernism. For although postmodern epistemology does reject the meta-narrative, its epistemology tends to suppose, if also to prescribe, a story for everyone: our individual actions should mimic our noetic structures. Be our beliefs conceived as a loosely knit, non-hierarchically intertwined amalgamation of unchallenged tacit assumptions—or as free-floating, hermeneutical spiral-driven, Escher-like imprisoned, dueling textualities—or as ever-shifting connectionist nodes of multiple reciprocities (and so forth, *ad nauseum*)—our actions, axiology, and intellect should inform each other and operate in accordance with each other. Likewise, MI’s epistemology maintains that value judgments must give rise to action—namely, to a Holy Spirit-inspired walk with Christ (for the Christian). CRE is not merely a static moment, if indeed some moments of CRE are more spiritually profound (“revelatory”) for the Christian and for the Christian community as a whole.

Accordingly, when Baillie speaks of the Christian “frame of reference” in his final work (SPG), he identifies as the paradigmatic experience the Holy Spirit’s Presence at Pentecost: here is a general guide for interpreting human experience, including other post-Pentecost religious CRE’s (e.g., revelatory moments; moments of deepening one’s

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<sup>538</sup> See Ch. 5, *passim*, esp. conclusion.

faith in Jesus) that one might encounter in one's walk with Christ. How does MI's descriptive epistemology of CRE relate to what has been identified as Baillie's increased communitarian emphasis in his latter thought? When Baillie describes the communitarian "triangular relationship" as one "mediated" the Holy Spirit's Presence at Pentecost, identifies its *koinonia* of *agapē* as the paradigm for Christian communal relations, and maintains that the Holy Spirit should guide the Christian community's collective walk with God today; he squarely relies on MI's descriptive epistemology of CRE to describe how the Holy Spirit provides, as Grenz would have, the cultivation of wisdom and spiritual growth

It is clear, then, that MI's description of CRE contends, with postmodernism, that spirituality is a communitarian enterprise characterized by good will and the cultivation of individual's personal capacity to realize existentially, in thought and deed, his or her values.

Ian Barbour observes that

If inherited religious symbols are for many people today almost totally detached from human experience, a return to the experiential basis of religion is important for its renewed vitality in practice, as well as for a sound epistemology in theory.<sup>539</sup>

I submit that the situation facing theology today is not unlike the situation that was facing theology when Baillie penned *IOR* in 1926: for the ordinary persons, the inherited religious symbols are almost totally detached from human experience.

Accordingly, the past two decades (in particular) have witnessed several prominent theologians, such as Barbour, engaging contemporary culture over the issue of Christian theology's reconcilability with empirical science. Itself something of a mediating theological enterprise, much of it has endeavored to square theology with theoretical physics, in particular. As important as that work surely is, I do think that there

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<sup>539</sup> Ian G. Barbour, *Myths, models, and paradigms: A comparative study in science and religion*. New York: Harpercollins College Div, 1974, p. 8.

is an air of unreality to it for much of postmodern culture. For one, the ordinary postmodern person tends to reject both science and theology as higher-order knowledges whose meta-narratives provide the best understanding of Reality. Secondly, the ordinary person is likely unable to comprehend both systematic theology and quantum theory. Thirdly, I suspect that the ordinary person does not think knowledge about physics essential to spirituality, though no doubt many postmodern persons find ethical liberation and spirituality in quantum physics. Fourthly, even those thinkers concerned primarily with theology's relationship with physics, such as Polkinghorne, have come to realize that contemporary theology must explore "the most important part of the frontier between science and religion," the social sciences, including psychology.<sup>540</sup>

Today's ordinary person is, largely, a postmodern person—one who can and does relate existentially to something called "spirituality".<sup>541</sup> Inasmuch as today's mediating theologian would engage postmodernity on the issue of religious experience, MI's description of CRE provides a promising model for such dialogue: MI's core epistemological beliefs overlap substantially with those of the ordinary person, as evidenced in MI's correspondence with much of the postmodern ethos. MI's description of CRE also holds potential for the conceptual modeling of revelatory religious experience, as evidenced in its correspondence with research from the psychology of religious experience. Here is an additional strength. Furthermore, while I would neither have MI's descriptive epistemology of CRE reduced to a scientific (or otherwise) naturalism—even if, for example, the felt immediacy of religious experience seems to be mediated by the dorsomedial frontal cortex<sup>542</sup>—nor its epistemic potential appraised according to its value as some instrumentalist epistemology; MI's description of CRE

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<sup>540</sup> Having expressed his hopes for theology in the third millennium, Polkinghorne finishes his lecture for the British Royal Academy with this statement: "The most neglected part of the frontier between science and religion, is the most important part of the frontier between science and religion, which is the human sciences, neuropsychology, psychology and so on. Working is going on there, but not enough, and I hope much more work will be in the future." John Polkinghorne, "Gifford Lectures Revisited: Reflections of Seven Templeton Laureates, Part. 2", *Gifford Lectures* video, 27.42 – 52.51, June 1, 2012, <http://www.giffordlectures.org/videos>.

<sup>541</sup> In his quite recent Gresham Lecture, one titled "Experience and the Spiritual Dimension," Keith Ward indicates: "I have chosen that phrase 'the spiritual dimension' because... one of the most common things people say in Britain is 'I am spiritual, but not religious'." (.57 - 1.09). Keith Ward. "Experience and the Spiritual Dimension", *Gresham Lectures* video, 50.56, January 27, 2015, <http://www.gresham.ac.uk/lectures-and-events/experience-and-the-spiritual-dimension>.

<sup>542</sup> Nina P. Azari, et al. "Neural correlates of religious experience." *European Journal of Neuroscience*, 13.8, 2001, pp. 1649-1652.

indicates, nevertheless, that MI has promising utility value for Contemporary Christian thought, as its logic does affirm no shortage of contemporary postmodern-cultural and contemporary empirical-psychological epistemology of religious experience. In particular, MI holds potential for Christian thought open, as I think it should be, to theological construction via multi-disciplinary dialogue. Consider, for example, MI's potential for Polkinghorne's frontier between science and religion: one might plausibly employ MI's descriptive epistemology in fruitful service to a theological method engaged in (at least) a four-way multi-disciplinary dialogue between: philosophical theology (descriptive models of religious experience—i.e., divine action, revelation), philosophy of religion (e.g., the phenomenology of religious experience), empirical psychology (models of the cognitive processes of religious experience) and postmodernism (including popular cultural perspectives on spiritual experience). The tenability of such an approach's promising is warranted by (for example): MI's epistemological strengths; empirical psychology's recent call for multi-disciplinary methods and multi-dialogical approaches for understanding religious experience; empirical psychology's recent conceptualization of multi-level models of religious experience;<sup>543</sup> and recent efforts in religious studies to engage the psychology of religion.<sup>544</sup> An emerging, multi-disciplinary research milieu, whose methods and models of CRE have been anticipated by thinkers such as Barbour, Ramsey, Bowker and Proudfoot (for example), it is but one area in which MI evidences plausible and immediate promise as a contribution to contemporary Christian thought of a certain bent.

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<sup>543</sup> Raymond F. Paloutzian and Crystal L. Park. "Recent Progress and Core Issues in the Science of the Psychology of Religion and Spirituality", in *Handbook of the Psychology of Religion and Spirituality*, eds. Raymond F. Paloutzian and Crystal L. Park, pp. 1-22. See esp. p. 15 ff. New York: Guildford Press, 2013.

<sup>544</sup> Taves, Ann. *Religious experience reconsidered: A building-block approach to the study of religion and other special things*. Princeton University Press, 2011. "In preparation: *Revelatory Events: Extra-Ordinary Experiences and New Visionary Movements*. This research project looks at the role that unusual experiences play in the earliest stages of three well-documented new spiritual paths (Mormonism, Alcoholics Anonymous, and *A Course in Miracles*)."<http://www.religion.ucsb.edu/people/faculty/ann-taves>

#### **8.4. CONCLUSION ON MAJOR RESEARCH ISSUE #3: MI'S DESCRIPTIVE EPISTEMOLOGY OF CRE: A PROMISING CONTRIBUTION TO CONTEMPORARY CHRISTIAN THOUGHT**

J.K. Mozley reminds us in the chapter's opening passage that John Baillie was "a singularly independent thinker". An observation not unlike that of H.R. Mackintosh, who found Baillie to be "the most creative mind"<sup>545</sup> of his thousands of students, Mozley's observation issues a warning to those who would "one day" assess the value of Baillie's thought: Baillie's thought often takes the reader down unfamiliar intellectual routes. Accordingly, Baillie's thought must be engaged carefully, creatively, critically and unconventionally, if one is to do justice to both its complexity and subtlety. I have endeavored to do that in this chapter, as have I throughout this thesis.

On the ground that MI's descriptive epistemology agrees in general with the cognitive psychology of religious experience; that MI coheres with, as well as promotes, the Christian theological tradition's emphasis on both the transcendence and immanence of God; that MI holds plausible promise as cognitive model of CRE *per se*; that MI also holds promise for contemporary Christian thought's engagement with today's ordinary person; I conclude that MI's function as a descriptive epistemology of CRE is John Baillie's promising contribution to contemporary Christian thought.

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<sup>545</sup> The program for Baillie's installation as lecturer at Auburn Seminary on Tuesday 26 October 1919 quotes Mackintosh: "He [Baillie] has the most creative mind I have known among my students." In Newlands, *Transatlantic Theology*, p. 65.

## 9. SUMMARY OF RESEARCH CONTRIBUTIONS

This research began with much speculation about the meaning of MI in the literature, as evidenced in competing interpretations about MI. Does MI's logic reduce to an historical or sacramental model? Is MI a metaphysical structure or argument? Does MI describe the mediation of knowledge of God as being a dyadic or a triadic relationship? Does MI separate faith from knowledge, or does it contend for an organic epistemological connection between faith and knowledge? Does MI evidence that Baillie was logically agnostic? Does MI's idea of immediacy fail to express a "theologically understanding" of Christian knowledge of God, or does MI's logic convey the very "logic of faith" itself? Does MI de-personalize Christian faith in Jesus Christ? These competing interpretations about MI's meaning beckoned an elucidation of MI's logic. This thesis has provided insight into MI's meaning in at least three respects: (1) it has provided a conceptual understanding of MI's meaning, by modeling its logic (Chapter 2); it has provided a contextual understanding of MI's meaning, by tracking MI's development as within the dynamic context of Baillie's MT's development (Chapters 3-5); (3) it has provided a corrected understanding of MI's logic, by engaging each of the above competing interpretations (Chapter 6). In short, the thesis has provided a clearer understanding of MI's meaning than will be found in the prior research. En route to this major research contribution, the thesis has delivered two additional research advances: (1) the modeling of MI's logic, which had not been previously modeled (Chapter 2); (2) research which indicates that Baillie's latter MT evidences a stronger doctrine of the Holy Spirit than that found in Baillie's early apologetic works (Chapter 5).

This thesis has also shown that MI's importance for Baillie's MT has been underestimated. Prior research has acknowledged MI's central importance for *OKG*, and has somewhat noted MI's residual effect on Baillie's latter works, particularly those concerned chiefly with knowledge of God. However, it has not maintained that MI is Baillie's most important concept for his latter MT. This thesis has demonstrated that it is.

Invariably, previous research has failed to detect MI's seminal presence in Baillie's early MT. This too has contributed to the underestimation of MI's importance

for Baillie's MT as a whole. This thesis has shown that a nascent version of MI exists in Baillie's MT—as early as 1926—however: MI appears in Baillie's idea of knowledge of God as being indirectly direct (ID). Evidence for MI's nascent presence in Baillie's early MT has been provided by the thesis's diachronic trace of Baillie's early (pre-1939) major works, those concerned with Baillie's ideas of revelation, knowledge of God, and religious experience, in particular. Specifically, that trace's elucidation of the apologist's arguments with manifold philosophies and theologies divulged a mediating theologian repeatedly maintaining that manifold religious and philosophical epistemologies make knowledge of God either too direct or too indirect (too mediated or too immediate). Accordingly, Baillie has been found to contend repeatedly that knowledge of God as ID is the better epistemological alternative, as its logic corresponds with what Baillie takes to be an accurate reading of the belief content of ordinary persons' religious consciousness. This discovery of MI's nascent presence in Baillie early MT constitutes a substantial research contribution.

This thesis has also provided a substantially more precise understanding of Baillie's MT's focus. Previous research has maintained that Baillie's critical thought gravitates toward the problems of revelation and knowledge of God; this thesis shows that Baillie's MT squarely focuses on the problem of the epistemological relationship between direct knowledge and indirect knowledge for knowledge of God (MTPP)—as across almost a 35-year span of theological development.

The ordering of John Baillie's non-systematic thought was found to be an ongoing challenge for John Baillie research. This thesis tackled that challenge with its diachronic trace. In the process, it discovered MTPP's presence in Baillie's first (ROR, IOR), middle (OKG), nearly last (IRRT), and very last (SPG), major epistemological works. As such, the thesis has provided John Baillie research a concept with which to chronologically and conceptually order Baillie's thought: MTPP.

Furthermore, the thesis has demonstrated that MI's epistemology is a promising contribution to contemporary Christian thought. Here is a first for John Baillie research, to my knowledge. Inasmuch as MI's promise is warranted, it constitutes a research contribution to John Baillie research, if also a minor contribution to contemporary Christian thought.



Lastly, we have raised the question about the field’s present estimation of John Baillie’s theological legacy. How should research arrive at a deeper understanding and fuller appreciation of it? Newlands provides the lead:

“My own suggestion for developing part of the legacy of John Baillie would be along these lines. Faith in God means trust in God for all things. It is from religious experience, as part of our experience of all life, that faith is formed and sustained. This is experience, we claim, not simply of experience but of God. It is based on reflection on experience, ours and that of others throughout history, and it includes other components as well. Faith means trust in one who is in important respects mysterious to us.”<sup>546</sup>

I have followed that lead; and this thesis instances what contributions can be made to John Baillie research, when Newlands’s insight is heeded. For this thesis has shown that MI’s epistemology does: situate CRE within the broader context of our life experience, when it emphasizes that faith in God is mediated by our shared knowledge of ourselves, others, the world, and God, including God’s Self-disclosure in and to our and moral consciousness; emphasizes that faith’s trust in God is mediated both by experience of God and by reflection upon that experience; and emphasizes that others, situated throughout history, mediate, sustain and deepen immediate knowledge of, and faith in, the One. In so doing, this thesis has afforded substantial insight into what is surely part of John Baillie’s theological legacy, his concept of mediated immediacy.

The past two decades have witnessed a resurgence of research on John Baillie’s life and thought, due in large to the research of Newlands and Fergusson. My hope is that this thesis, the definitive work on mediated immediacy, has helped to nudge it along further still—with a measure of freshness, creativity and originality, *à la* John Baillie.

87, 827 words

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<sup>546</sup> Newlands, “The Sense of the Presence of God”, p. 167.

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#### 10.2.4. Appendix A: Theological Language's Limitations and The Apologist's Mediation of Knowledge of God

According to Baillie, Christian theology is the science of the God-human relationship in the human soul. It operates on critical-realist assumptions that religious consciousness (Christian, or otherwise), revelation, and theological language can be epistemologically connected to God's thought. Ground for this epistemological connection comes from Baillie's interrogation and description of the belief content of the religious consciousness of humankind. All humans appear to evidence an immediate knowledge of God in their (gradated) moral consciousness of value; to believe that second-order truths (language) can participate in the logical structure of God, the ground of all being and knowing; to believe that knowledge of God is self-authenticating; to believe that there is an ontological connection between the human spirit and the Spirit of God—to believe, that is, that there is a divine-human relationship in the human soul. Baillie's thought on the scope, limitations, and purpose of apologetic language mirrors at least three other long-standing positions in Baillie's thought: Baillie's distinctions between second-order truths and first-order realities; faith's immediate knowledge of God and other realities by direct acquaintance; and theological language's reflexive action upon, and discursive (mediated) knowledge about, God. Baillie maintains that these types of knowledges are also epistemologically connected; that doctrine can correspond to the beliefs inherent in religious experience, be its reference to the general experience of humankind (faith in God) or to Christian religious experience (faith in God's being in Jesus Christ). The Christian theologian recognizes that "[t]he proper name of religious experience is faith",<sup>547</sup> recognizing also that faith, Christian or otherwise, is not a passionate commitment to second-order truths *about* God (i.e., never a trust in theological language); rather, it is a commitment to God with all of one's being. Accordingly, the Christian apologist recognizes that theological language cannot "exhibit" the God immediately-known, regardless of how many true propositions can be marshaled as support for God's existence. Nonetheless, theological language can be used effectively in service to God: for while religious consciousness does believe knowledge of God to be an

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<sup>547</sup> *SPG*, p. 64.

immediate knowledge, an interrogation of the religious consciousness of humankind suggests that all humans have a basic knowledge about God (moral consciousness) that interrogation also shows that, while faith in God (religious consciousness) admits of varying degrees, faith is universally regarded as “a moral trust in the ultimate Source of power, a confident reference of our values to the real order of things”.<sup>548</sup> The religious apologist’s use of theological language should be informed by these and other key observations about religious consciousness’s beliefs, including the beliefs that: faith comes from immediate knowledge of God; knowledge of God is grounded in, and mediated by, humans’ moral consciousness of value. The apologist will also be reminded that knowledge of God is often repressed (Freud) to the extent that some persons (e.g., the intellectual atheist) are not self-consciously consciously aware of their faith in God. The specifically Christian apologist’s attempt to use language to exhibit the belief content of the God-human relationship, as interpreted by religious consciousness, is one informed furthermore by the epistemological distinction between knowledge about Jesus Christ (doctrine) and faith’s immediate knowledge of God’s being in Jesus Christ (CRE). The apologist’s incorporation of these insights helps the apologist to make way for the coming of faith’s immediate knowledge of Christ (Christian religious consciousness), as language mediates divine action and, by God’s grace as well, divine revelation.

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<sup>548</sup> *IOR*, p. 340.

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