MICHAEL RAMSEY, ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY:

INCARNATIONAL ANGLICANISM AND BRITISH SOCIETY, 1928-1974

by

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DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

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This dissertation analyzes the theology and politics of Michael Ramsey between his ordination in 1928 and his retirement in 1974. Ramsey entered the priesthood after a burgeoning career in law and Liberal politics. I argue that Ramsey's later political activism as Archbishop of Canterbury was a continuation of his early political engagement at Cambridge. However, the Anglican Incarnational theological tradition exemplified in the writings of F. D. Maurice, Charles Gore, and William Temple exerted a powerful influence on Ramsey's politics after he entered the priesthood. This dissertation locates Ramsey within that Incarnational tradition, and I argue that the Incarnation was the locus not only of his theological writings and his historical writings on Anglican theology, but also of his political activism in the 1960s and early 1970s. I draw heavily on unpublished letters and autobiographical essays from the Ramsey Papers at Lambeth Palace, as well as on his speeches to ordinands and in House of Lords. Two chapters contain analyses of nearly all of Ramsey's published corpus, with one devoted to his historical writings and the other to his social theological writings. A third chapter analyzes three examples of Ramsey's activism at Canterbury (on legal reform for homosexual acts, the Rhodesian crisis of 1965, and Commonwealth immigration) within

the context of his Incarnational social theology. I argue that the primary issue for Ramsey in each example was the affirmation of human dignity and conscience, regardless of race, religion, or sexual orientation, and that his belief in the post-Incarnational sanctification of humankind led him to emphasize the social values that he did.

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CHAPTER I

RAMSEY, INCARNATIONAL ANGLICANISM, AND BRITISH SOCIETY, 1928-1974

1. Overview

In a clerical career that lasted over sixty years, Michael Ramsey served the Church of England in several capacities. His writings made him one of the most renowned British theologians of the century. As an intellectual historian, he made major contributions to historical understanding of Anglican thought. His academic career culminated in one of Britain's most prestigious appointments as Regius Professor of Divinity at Cambridge. His episcopal career led him in a remarkably swift ascension from Bishop of Durham to Archbishop of Canterbury in nine years. His tenure as Primate of All England has been widely reckoned as one of the most distinguished since the death of Archbishop Archibald Campbell Tait in 1882.

Michael Ramsey was born in 1904. The son of a Cambridge mathematics don, he was raised in a comfortably middle-class family that valued intellectual accomplishment and academic achievement. His older brother, Frank, was a noted mathematician and economist whom John Maynard Keynes later memorialized in his *Essays in Biography*. Frank was a peripheral figure in the Bloomsbury circle, and his early death at 26 was a devastating loss to his younger brother. Ramsey left home to attend Repton, where his headmaster was the future Archbishop of Canterbury, Geoffrey Fisher. He then attended Magdalene, his father's college at Cambridge, and briefly studied law before switching to theology and pursuing Holy Orders. While an

undergraduate, Ramsey participated avidly in Liberal Party politics. He spoke at campaign rallies for Liberal candidates and stood successfully for President of the Cambridge Union, an important position which many notable British politicians have used to launch their political careers. In the twilight of his career, former Prime Minister H. H. Asquith himself was so impressed by Ramsey's speaking that he predicted the future archbishop would one day be leader of the Liberal Party.

After he entered the Church, Ramsey's early career alternated between brief periods in pastoral work and longer periods in academe. He spent the 1940s teaching theology at Durham University. Ramsey specialized in biblical theology, a thriving field when he became a professor in the 1930s. In 1936, he published his first book, *The Gospel and the Catholic Church*, and it remains his most influential and enduring work. Ramsey's early writings in biblical theology were influenced by Edwyn Hoskyns, the High Anglican biblical scholar, and by Karl Barth, the Swiss founder of the neo-orthodox school. Other influences on his religious thought included F. D. Maurice, B. F. Westcott, Charles Gore, and William Temple, each of whom had been a prominent Anglican theologian and socialist. Ramsey moved away from pure theology in later works such as *From Gore to Temple: An Era in Anglican Theology* (1960), one of the great works of Anglican intellectual history, and *The Christian Priest Today* (1972), a classic work written to instruct ordinands.

Ramsey became Bishop of Durham in 1952, Archbishop of York in 1956, and Archbishop of Canterbury in 1961. His time at Canterbury lasted until 1974 and coincided with significant social, cultural, and political tumult. Britain in the 1960s had emerged from the austerity of the immediate post-World War II era into a period of rising

wages, relaxed class relations, and inexorable secularization. Ramsey's support for socially liberal legislation made him one of the lightning rods for criticism of what became known as the "permissive society." Among the most contentious social and political issues between 1961 and 1974 were immigration, the decriminalization of homosexual acts, the abolition of capital punishment, race relations, and Britain's relationship with the white-minority regime in Rhodesia. On each of these issues, Ramsey took positions on the left of the political spectrum, and his stances frequently occasioned considerable public controversy.

2. Argument and Methodology

My dissertation is an analysis of the continuity between Ramsey's theological and other religious writings, and the social and political causes which he endorsed and sometimes even championed as Archbishop of Canterbury. The dissertation combines intellectual biography and religious history, and evaluates Ramsey's place in British life in the 1960s, a period which marked what Callum G. Brown has described as "the death of Christian Britain."[1] Historical and theological scholarship on Ramsey has almost invariably failed to connect these two phases (as a theologian and as a bishop) of his life and career, and when the connection has been made, the arguments have tended to be tenuous and diffuse. Consequently, important historical questions remained unanswered. Examples include the following: How do Ramsey's writings help us to understand his episcopate? Was his consuming commitment to politics as an undergraduate at Cambridge just an aberration before his priestly vocation led him to the Church, or did

[1] In Brown's book *The Death of Christian Britain* (London: Routledge, 2001), he argues that the 1960s were the first decade of a period of unprecedented secularization and fundamental rejection of Christianity as a force in British society.

those political convictions influence him decades later during his rise through the Anglican hierarchy? What was Ramsey's place in the history of Anglican theology in relation to Maurice, Gore, Temple, and others? How did Ramsey use his position as Primate of All England to promote certain political causes? What explains Ramsey's increasingly radical politics during his years as Archbishop of Canterbury? These are the questions for which my dissertation provides answers. I argue that there was a social element to nearly all of Ramsey's theological writings, and that his "social ecclesiology" became more overt after he entered the episcopate in 1952. I use Ramsey's writings as a template to explain his role in the political debates of the 1960s and early 1970s.

In this dissertation, I make use of Ramsey's entire body of published writings, as well as his unpublished essays, letters, and personal notes contained in the Ramsey Papers at Lambeth Palace. In addition, I use Ramsey's speeches in the House of Lords and in his capacity as the chairman of the British Council of Churches between 1961 and 1974, many of which are vital expressions of his views on religious and social and political issues during his period at Canterbury. I also analyze Ramsey's topical essays, almost all of which he wrote after he became a bishop; they reflect their author's increasing concern with social questions which accompanied his rising stature in the Church and on the national stage. As both a biblical theologian and a bishop, Ramsey believed that the status, organization, and social role of the Church had their origins in the Gospels, and that the Church was uniquely positioned—indeed obligated—to advocate reformist stances on questions of sexuality, race relations, capital punishment, and social justice, provided these reforms would bring English society closer to his ideal of a Christian society. Frequently, this entailed taking positions that outraged social

conservatives and large swathes of the British public. His early academic writings may have been grounded in the tradition of Barth and Hoskyns, but his topical essays contained a strong streak of liberal Christian social thought that had its origins in the tradition of Maurice, Gore, and Temple. As his career progressed, particularly after he became a bishop, Ramsey's writings began to articulate his liberal political convictions. Pure theology held less interest for him, though he remained preoccupied with Anglican intellectual history. Just as Maurice was no orthodox socialist, neither was Ramsey a classic High Churchman nor a straightforward Christian socialist. He had assimilated disparate influences, and his theology and episcopate reflected them.

The sections of the dissertation dealing with the intellectual history of Anglican socialism are a continuation of my previous research into the Oxford Movement for my master's thesis. Though Ramsey cannot be described as a Christian socialist, he always acknowledged his debt to the great tradition of Anglican socialist thought. This tradition had its origins in the writings of Maurice, whose *The Kingdom of Christ* (1838) and later writings exerted enormous influence over Christian socialism in England until well into the twentieth century. Gore was the leader of the late-Victorian Christian socialist resurgence. In 1889, he helped found the Christian Social Union, an organization dedicated to propagating socialism within the Church of England and British society at large. He became a powerful advocate for the cause. In his history of English Christian socialism, Edward Norman wrote that, by 1900, one-third of all episcopal appointments came from within the ranks of the CSU.[2] Temple was the outstanding Anglican exponent of Christian socialism in the twentieth century. Like Ramsey, he was a distinguished

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[2] Edward Norman, *The Victorian Christian Socialists* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 172.

theologian whose career in the Church culminated in appointments to both York and Canterbury. In works such as *Christianity and the Social Order* (1942), Temple brought his vision of Christian socialism to a wider audience than any of his predecessors had ever reached. His espousal of socialism, especially during his brief tenure at Canterbury, helped win public approval for the radical socialist reforms of Clement Attlee's Labor government between 1945 and 1951. My dissertation traces the lineage of Ramsey's social thought, particularly as it related to his controversial period as Primate.

In books such as *F. D. Maurice and the Conflicts of Modern Theology* (1951) and *From Gore to Temple*, Ramsey explored the lives and writings of his major intellectual influences. In doing so, he also outlined his own development as a Christian thinker. My dissertation includes close readings of Ramsey's writings on ecclesiastical and theological history. *F. D. Maurice* was an especially important work, despite its brevity. Ramsey explained his reverence for his subject in the first chapter, in which he compared Maurice to Thomas Carlyle, John Stuart Mill, Alfred Lord Tennyson, and other Victorian luminaries.[3] He wrote that Coleridge, whose devotion to the Church of England was a source of considerable prestige for nineteenth-century Anglicans, was Maurice's formative influence, and that they shared a religious sensibility that was both deeply conservative and stridently modern in its character. Ramsey wrote of Coleridge and Maurice: "Common to both of them . . . is a peculiar mixture of the conservative and the radical: a devotion to the old institutions combined with a wish to overthrow the more familiar grounds of defending them."[4] Ramsey's description is equally applicable to his

[3] Michael Ramsey, *F. D. Maurice and the Conflicts of Modern Theology* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1951), 9.

[4] Ibid., 19.

own career. Among Ramsey's twentieth-century predecessors at Canterbury, only William Temple espoused such radical solutions to social problems. The other Primates—Davidson, Lang, and Fisher—were reliable conservatives on virtually all of the great social and political questions of their times, though Lang did court some criticism when he endorsed the use of contraception at the 1930 Lambeth Conference.

Biographer Michael De-la-Noy wrote that Ramsey was "a liberal by instinct" and "far from typical of an Establishment leader of his generation."[5] During the century before Ramsey became Primate, all of the archbishops had come from elite backgrounds, moving in elevated social and religious circles before their accessions to the episcopate. In part, this explains their conservatism on social and political questions. Ramsey, on the other hand, was very much an outsider, a Cambridge don who had forged his intellectual and pastoral views on his own, largely through his tireless reading in Anglican history and theology. His affinity for figures such as Gore and Temple was only reinforced when he was consecrated as Bishop of Durham.

The see of Durham is one of the Church of England's oldest and most prestigious bishoprics, fourth in line in the episcopal hierarchy behind Canterbury, York, and London. Always conscious of the historical traditions of the offices he held, Ramsey wrote a sermon on his Durham predecessors and the style of Church leadership which they represented to him. Bishop Westcott was an especially inspiring example to Ramsey, who considered him the exemplar of the "Durham tradition." Ramsey described the main elements of this tradition as "first, the love of sacred learning; next, the union of ecclesiastical office with statecraft and the realm as a whole; and third, an

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[5] Michael De-la-Noy, *Michael Ramsey: A Portrait* (London: Collins, 1990), 174-175.

otherworldliness which lives in touch with things unseen."[6] Ramsey located the origins of this tradition of scholarship and social activism as far back as the Venerable Bede. Ramsey delivered the sermon at his coronation at Durham Cathedral in 1952, and I interpret it as the announcement of a new engagement with the broader questions of British politics and society that would remain a feature of Ramsey's career until his retirement in 1974. Each time he received a new appointment, Ramsey looked to the writings and examples of his predecessors for guidance in his own conduct as a bishop. Toward the end of his period at Canterbury, he wrote in *The Christian Priest Today*: "I have only to recall the names of a few of my own predecessors, [Thomas] Becket, [Thomas] Cranmer, [William] Laud, William Temple, to see both that the problem of the priest and politics is unavoidable and that it takes different forms in different ages."[7] The transition from academe to the bishop's benches was also a transition from pure theology to the public arena.

I argue that Incarnational theology formed the basis of Ramsey's social and political activism, before and during his primacy. This is a major revision of previous scholarship on Ramsey. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, Anglican Incarnational theology emphasized the transformative nature of God's assumption of human form in Christ. It has long been synonymous in Anglicanism with Christian Socialism and liberal social theology. The fundamental concept in Incarnational theology was that, by becoming a human being and immersing himself in the daily lives and sufferings of other human beings, Christ had sanctified humankind and its societies. Ramsey's extensive

[6] Ramsey, "The Durham Tradition," in *Durham Essays and Addresses* (London: SPCK, 1956), 87.

[7] Ramsey, *The Christian Priest Today* (London: SPCK, 1985; originally published in 1972), 34.

reading of Gore and Temple at Cambridge and during the early years of his career gave him a thorough grounding in Incarnational thought, but its influence was not apparent in his writings until he began to study the works of Maurice in the early 1930s. Maurice's *The Kingdom of Christ* was the touchstone of Incarnational theology for subsequent Christian Socialists and liberals such as Ramsey. In it, Maurice wrote that "He [Christ] came to establish a kingdom, and . . . that kingdom was to be within us."[8] He continued:

> Christ, the Living Word, the Universal Light, appeared to men, and showed in his own person what processes He was carrying on in the hearts of all; subduing the flesh, keeping Himself separate from the world, submitting to death. This manifestation was the signal for the commencement of a new dispensation; sensible emblems were no longer to intercept man's view of his Lord; national distinctions were to be abolished; men might be treated as belonging to a higher state than that which they lost in Adam; they might attain a perfection which did not exist in Adam.[9]

The Incarnation required Christians to see themselves and their fellow human beings as creatures made in the image of God, who had become incarnate in human form as Christ. Christ had revealed the nature of God to humankind, and his example demanded Christ-like altruism in our interactions with other human beings. These principles guided Ramsey's decision-making processes on issues such as homosexuality and legal reform, foreign policy, immigration, and the death penalty, among others.

Apart from Ramsey's own writings and those of the theologians who influenced him, my other main historical source is the massive Ramsey Papers at the Lambeth Palace Library in London. Among the most valuable documents in the archive are a series of long, unpublished autobiographical essays that Ramsey wrote between the 1950s

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[8] F. D. Maurice, *The Kingdom of Christ* (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1874; originally published in 1838), 53.

[9] Ibid.

and the early 1980s. These essays covered diverse topics, including the archbishop's intellectual development, theology and various theologians, his fellow bishops, and his political allies and opponents during the 1960s. Ramsey was remarkably candid in these writings. For example, he wrote a revealing memoir of Geoffrey Fisher, his onetime headmaster at Repton and later his predecessor at Canterbury, after the latter's death in 1971.   Like most of the autobiographical writings, the Fisher essay offers the historian insights into Ramsey's theological and political views which are not apparent in his published writings. Ramsey's analysis of his unhappy relationship with Fisher revealed the centrality of theology in his own actions as a bishop, as well as in his conflicts with those who did not share his religious and political predilections.

The division between Fisher's mainstream Protestant Anglicanism and Ramsey's historically minded, theologically erudite High Churchmanship was a source of mutual distrust. Ramsey wrote that Fisher "tended to regard me as rather a High Church partisan and . . . *he was unable to see that the Maurice type of Catholicism for which I stood was very different indeed from conventional High Church partisanship*."[10] The care with which Ramsey delineated his own intellectual and theological pedigree, which he located not in the mainstream of Anglo-Catholicism but rather in the social theology of Maurice, was significant. Ramsey defined himself in his private writings as above all a disciple of Maurice, the iconoclastic socialist and radical. The Ramsey Papers contain many documents that serve as a kind of guided tour through Ramsey's intellectual development, including handwritten notes from his private readings in Anglican theology from the 1920s and 1930s, as well as correspondence with other theologians and Church

[10] Ramsey, "Ramsey and Fisher," unpublished document from the Ramsey Papers, vol. 322, 150-152. Italics added.

leaders. Other documents include dozens of letters to and from Ramsey in response to the public controversies in which he involved himself. In these letters, Ramsey often explained his motivations with considerably more detail and nuance than he was able to do in the media. I use Ramsey's unpublished writings to contextualize my analysis of his evolution as a Christian thinker and bishop.

3. Ramsey Scholarship

Scholarly writings on Ramsey take two forms, historical and theological, with little overlap between the two. The archbishop was the subject of three biographies. The first, *The Hundredth Archbishop of Canterbury* by James B. Simpson, was written just after Ramsey's elevation to Canterbury and is of relatively little historical value. The author chose a superficial, personality-based approach to historical biography, with little analysis of his subject's writings or the theological traditions that helped to shape them.

The second biography, *Michael Ramsey* by Owen Chadwick, was the product of years of research and remains the standard account of Ramsey's life and career. Chadwick was an Anglican priest, a friend of the Ramseys, and one of the great historians of Christianity. His unsurpassed knowledge of the Church of England made him uniquely qualified to write a life of Ramsey. Unfortunately, what he produced was a seriously flawed work. When he began work on his book, Chadwick solicited personal appraisals of Ramsey from the archbishop's friends and colleagues. Ultimately, he chose not to address or even refer to the critical appraisals he received of Ramsey as man and theologian, documents now held in the Ramsey Papers at Lambeth. The book's dearth of references to primary sources is astonishing, and the author's lack of interest in his subject's theology is evident. Rather than offer an objective and comprehensive

analysis of Ramsey's writings, Chadwick provided platitude-laden summaries. For example, his description of *The Gospel and the Catholic Church* did not feature a single textual citation or any examination of the book's argument. "The child of a nonconformist father learnt to drink deep of the Catholic tradition," Chadwick wrote in a characteristically vague and self-evident example.[11] Chadwick's neglect of Ramsey's theological and historical writings was one of his book's major deficiencies; another was his idealized portrait of Ramsey himself. The main value of Chadwick's biography was its excellent portrayal of Ramsey's career at Canterbury, including the public controversies that accompanied many of the archbishop's positions on various social and political questions.

Michael De-la-Noy's *Michael Ramsey: A Portrait* is a much more nuanced and probing portrait. De-la-Noy had been an assistant to Ramsey in the 1960s, and later began a career as an outstanding biographer and historian of the Anglican Church. Though not a trained theologian, De-la-Noy devoted considerable attention to Ramsey's academic career and theological interests. His biography contextualized Ramsey within the wider world of Anglican thought and included extensive commentary on Ramsey's writings by such notable figures as David Jenkins and Don Cupitt. The chapter on Ramsey's political tribulations during the Sixties is easily the best analysis of the topic to date. Unlike Chadwick, De-la-Noy was not the archbishop's "official" biographer, and his assessment of Ramsey was unconstrained by any relationship with the Ramsey estate. The Michael Ramsey of De-la-Noy's book was not the endearing, avuncular figure portrayed by Chadwick. Ramsey's conflicts with other members of the Anglican

[11] Owen Chadwick, *Michael Ramsey: A Life* (London: Oxford University Press, 1990), 48.

hierarchy, especially conservatives and evangelicals, and his sometimes ruthless treatment of his staff and assistants were outlined in detail. At roughly half the length of Chadwick's bloated hagiography, *Michael Ramsey: A Portrait* is a major work of Anglican and British history.

Ramsey has been the subject of two anthologies devoted to his theology. The first, *Michael Ramsey as Theologian*, was edited by Robin Gill and Lorna Kendall, and is the more comprehensive of the two. The topics range across all of Ramsey's theological interests, whether biblical, pastoral, ecumenical, or social, and include superb essays on Ramsey's grounding in the Roman Catholic and Orthodox traditions as well. Of particular significance are an essay by Kenneth Leech on Ramsey's social theology and John M. Court's essay on Ramsey's contributions to biblical theology (easily the best single examination of this topic for historians). In all of the published scholarship on Ramsey, Kenneth Leech has been the only author to make the connection between Ramsey's writings and his social advocacy in the episcopate. A High Anglican socialist theologian, Leech presented a short but perceptive analysis of Ramsey's "Christian sociology" and some of its most significant theological antecedents. He noted that Ramsey has typically been seen not as a social theologian, but rather as a thinker who focused primarily on "the Church itself, on matters of ecclesiology, liturgy, and apostolic order, or on the personal spiritual lives of Christians, and only slightly on the great issues of the world."[12] The essay argued that Ramsey was the inheritor of Leech referred to as Maurice's "radical social incarnational and sacramental tradition."[13] Despite its brevity,

[12] Kenneth Leech, "Glory in Trouble: The Social Theology of Michael Ramsey," in *Michael Ramsey as Theologian*, ed. Robin Gill and Lorna Kendall (Boston: Cowley Publications, 1995), 101.

[13] Ibid., 111.

Leech's essay is the most comprehensive treatment of its topic to date. However, its author referred to Ramsey's later topical essays only in passing, perhaps due to length constraints for inclusion in the anthology. My dissertation incorporates these writings as a primary component of its argument.

The second anthology on Ramsey's theology is *Glory Descending: Michael Ramsey and His Writings*, edited jointly by Anglican luminaries Douglas Dales, Geoffrey Rowell (Bishop of Gibraltar), John Habgood (former Archbishop of York), and Rowan Williams (the current Archbishop of Canterbury). For the historian, this volume offers less insight into Ramsey's career and his place in twentieth-century Anglican theology than does *Michael Ramsey as Theologian*. The essays are intelligent and mostly well chosen, but they were written by theologians for theologians. The topics are narrow, abstract, and ahistorical.

4. Chapter Summaries

Chapter I: Ramsey, Incarnational Anglicanism, and British Society, 1928-1974

Overview of the dissertation, including argument, methodology, and analyses of previous scholarship.

Chapter II: Liberal Anglicanism and the Incarnation

This chapter contains an analysis of Ramsey's autobiographical writings to trace his intellectual development as a theologian between his Cambridge undergraduate years in the middle of the 1920s and his accession to Canterbury in 1961. It also includes a complete overview of his historical writings on Anglican theology, which reveal his liberal and Incarnational vision of Anglicanism as a religious tradition.

Chapter III: The Social Theology of Michael Ramsey

This chapter explores the entirety of Ramsey's social theological writings, most of which he wrote after he became Bishop of Durham in 1952. The topics include the role of clergy in a secularizing society, the need for tolerance for diverging viewpoints in religious and political discourse, the significance of the Incarnation for human society, and the continued relevance of the Church as an advocate of social justice.

Chapter IV: A Political Archbishop

This chapter examines Ramsey's political activism as Archbishop of Canterbury within the context of three major controversies: the decriminalization of homosexual acts, the crisis over Rhodesian independence, and the debate over Commonwealth immigration. I explore the manner in which Ramsey used his position as Primate to advance political and social causes that reflected his Incarnational vision of a Christian society.

Chapter V: The Incarnation, the Church, and British Society

Conclusion of the dissertation, with an examination of Ramsey's religious and political influence on the Church of England in the three decades after his retirement.

CHAPTER II

LIBERAL ANGLICANISM AND THE INCARNATION

1. Christian Socialism and Liberal Catholicism, 1838-1942

Michael Ramsey's work as a theologian and a historian of theology constituted his greatest contribution to Anglicanism. Theology was the driving force in Ramsey's intellectual and pastoral work throughout his career. Between his ordination in 1928 and his death in 1988, he was almost always either writing works of theology, or writing about the theology of other Christian (mostly Anglican) thinkers. Had he not accepted Churchill's offer to become Bishop of Durham in 1952, Ramsey would have been content to continue as Cambridge's Regius Professor of Divinity, the position that he then held and for which he was uniquely qualified. Ramsey was proud of the Anglican theological tradition, the authors of which were his constant intellectual companions. Although his influence as a theologian had declined long before his accession to the archbishopric of Canterbury in 1961, his writings on Anglican theological history remain as valuable and penetrating as they were when they first appeared in the 1940s and 1950s.

Ramsey's influences demonstrated the diversity of Anglican thought between 1840 and 1940. F. D. Maurice, Charles Gore, and William Temple can each be described as a "Christian Socialist," but their writings reflected the different social, political, and religious contexts from which they had emerged. In his purely theological writings, Ramsey concerned himself largely with biblical and ecclesiastical questions rather than with social and political issues. However, his massive erudition as a scholar of Anglican theology enabled him to assimilate disparate schools of thought into his own distinctive

form of social theology. Ramsey grounded his views on the Church and its role in a late-industrial, post-colonial, capitalist society in the social thought of his liberal Anglican predecessors, although this grounding sometimes escaped notice because he chose to concentrate many of his statements on these questions to diocesan publications, parliamentary debates, and works of intellectual history.

The Anglicanism to which Ramsey subscribed was a blend of Maurice's Incarnationalism, Gore's Anglo-Catholic social consciousness, and Temple's active political engagement. These influences manifested themselves most evidently in the last two decades of Ramsey's career, when his elevation to the upper reaches of the Anglican hierarchy forced the donnish theologian to take stands on a variety of contentious social and political questions. In one of his most important historical writings, Ramsey wrote that the authors of the Anglican essay collection *Lux Mundi* (1889) were united by "a common discipleship towards the Oxford Movement" and by a desire to reconcile the historic catholic faith to "modern intellectual and moral problems"—but not the reverse.[14] Their views of religion and society compelled them to argue that educated, believing Christians should see "contemporary secular thought as an ally rather than as an enemy."[15] That characterization showed Ramsey the intellectual historian at his best. He was describing not only the thinking behind *Lux Mundi*, but also the essence of liberal Anglicanism itself. Ramsey's description also encapsulated his own theological and social vision.

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[14] Michael Ramsey, *From Gore to Temple: The Development of Anglican Theology between* Lux Mundi *and the Second World War, 1889-1939* (London: Longmans, 1960), 2-3.

[15] Ibid.

In this chapter I will analyze Ramsey's writings on the history of Anglican theology between the end of the Oxford Movement in 1845 and the death of William Temple in 1944, with particular emphasis upon Ramsey's comments on his foremost intellectual influences, Frederick Maurice, Charles Gore, and William Temple. The purpose of this overview is twofold: to determine what these theologians had to say about the relationship between Church and society; and to trace the evolution of Ramsey's social theology through his own published and unpublished writings on Anglican intellectual history. I will use Ramsey's autobiographical writings to provide a comprehensive account of his development as a theologian and a historian. These documents reveal a fundamental tension in his theological endeavors: between his dedication to theology as a form of abstract religious philosophy, and his powerful belief in its utility in the creation of a "Christian society," as Ramsey conceptualized one. They also reveal how important social theology was to Ramsey's religious life, even before his ordination.

Ramsey championed Christianity's continued relevance in a time of major social and cultural change. Ramsey the historian both praised the liberalism of his Victorian and Edwardian predecessors, and critiqued their conservatism on doctrinal questions. In his excellent monograph on Temple's theology, John Kent wrote that Temple "set out during the First World War to modernize the institutions and liberalize the theology of the Church of England."[16] Kent added that Temple's "success in making the concept of greater social equality more respectable in middle-class religious circles remained a solid

[16] John Kent, *William Temple: Church, State, and Society in Britain, 1880-1950* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), ix.

contribution to the setting-up of the British Welfare State after the Second World War."[17] No such grand pronouncements could accurately describe Ramsey's intellectual influence as Archbishop of York and Archbishop of Canterbury. Ramsey did not have any such ambitious goals, although his social and theological inclinations were quite similar to those of Temple. But his public stances on many issues in British social and political life in the 1960s can be understood only through the activist Anglican tradition which Temple epitomized. This chapter will revise and clarify our understanding of Ramsey's place in modern Anglican history, and will reveal the origins of his political activism as Archbishop of Canterbury.

2. Preparing for Canterbury: Ramsey's Religious Formation, 1923-1961

In his last years at Canterbury and then intermittently during the decade after his retirement in 1974, Ramsey wrote a series of extensive autobiographical reflections on events ranging from his early family life and education to his elevation to the episcopate and experiences during the tumultuous 1960s. In them, he included particularly enlightening analyses of the evolution of his thinking as a theologian and his rising influence in Anglican theological circles in the 1930s and 1940s. Ramsey's intention in writing these memoirs was to give future scholars an account of his life and career from his own perspective, and to explain the theological and moral beliefs that motivated his actions as Primate. These documents reveal that a combination of Anglican Christian Socialism and reformist Asquithian Liberalism led him to the priesthood.

[17] Ibid., ix, 4.

In his autobiographical documents, Ramsey explained his attraction to Anglo-Catholicism in terms of its social theology; this, combined with the aesthetic elements of High Church ritual, fascinated the Cambridge undergraduate. However, these documents reveal that the social element of liberal Anglo-Catholicism (Ramsey never indicated any attraction for conservative Anglo-Catholicism) was much more important to the future archbishop than ritualism. In this formative period of his religious development, Ramsey rejected Anglican traditions that lacked a coherent social theology. In an essay entitled "Religion: Cambridge," he wrote: "Certainly the Catholic presentation of Anglicanism was powerful in Cambridge. It impressed me as a supernatural religion which was both intellectually lively and also aware of the social dimensions of Christianity. It gave me so much strength and variety that [evangelical organizations] made no appeal to me at all."[18] He found the evangelical Cambridge Inter-Collegiate Christian Union "repulsive with its fundamentalism."[19] The distaste for religious fundamentalism which the future archbishop would express throughout his career was fully formed at Cambridge.

Ramsey was at Cambridge during the later years of Gore's life, while Temple was approaching the pinnacle of his renown and influence, both of which increased with his elevation from Bishop of Manchester to Archbishop of York in 1928. Temple had by this time eclipsed Gore as the intellectual leader of Anglican Christian Socialism. His prestige within the Anglican hierarchy was enormous, even among bishops who rejected the radicalism of his ideas. Ramsey's recollections document his excitement after experiencing Gore's and Temple's preaching first-hand. A sermon by Gore made an

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[18] Ramsey, "Religion: Cambridge," unpublished document in the Ramsey Papers, v. 322, 30-32, 30.

[19] Ibid.

"overwhelming impression" on Ramsey during the height of the latter's political involvement at Cambridge.[20] In his memoir, he emphasized the centrality of Gore and Temple in the formation of his mature religious ideas: "In my first term at Cambridge I read . . . Charles Gore's *Belief in God*. That was my starting point. Two years later . . . I read the two books which were formative for me for a long time, Gore's *Bampton Lectures on the Incarnation*, and William Temple's *Christus Veritas*."[21] *Belief in God* (1921) would remain one of the theological touchstones of Ramsey's life. Gore had written it as an impassioned defense of traditional Christian orthodoxy, and although Ramsey took a more liberal approach to doctrinal questions than did Gore, he shared Gore's firm belief in the divinity of Christ. Gore wrote that God revealed through Christ "the truth by which men could live, both about the divine nature and purpose and about human nature."[22] Gore's writings combined sacramental Anglo-Catholicism with a commitment to socioeconomic justice which, if more diffuse in their goals than the activism of Temple, nevertheless exerted the dominant influence on Ramsey's early career.

Ramsey referred to these works again in another short memoir, this time of what he called his "year of decision" (1926) at Cambridge. Temple and Gore had "gathered my thinking together, and indeed . . . gave me the structure of my Christian belief for a good many years to come," he wrote.[23] Just as Gore had made a deep personal

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[20] Ibid, 31-32.

[21] Ibid.

[22] Charles Gore, *Belief in God* (London: Hazell, Watson, & Viney, Ltd: 1921), 284.

[23] Ramsey, "Cambridge: Year of Decision, 1925-1926," unpublished document in the Ramsey Papers, v. 322, 34-43, 36.

impression on Ramsey, so did the experience of seeing Temple deliver a series of lectures in person:

> Temple spoke every evening for a week in Great St. Mary's. What he said was not very new to me as I had found it already in his writings but listening to him crystallized the thought for me and showed me what the thought meant when conveyed not only through books but through a personality. I think I had reached anyhow my chief attitudes about Christianity and about my own vocation, so it is misleading to say either that I was converted by Temple's mission or that I found my vocation through it. But it certainly helped to clinch matters.[24]

Ramsey was at a critical stage in his religious life when he attended Temple's lectures in 1926. He was working at this time in the impoverished East End borough of Stepney at St. Augustine's, a well-known Anglo-Catholic slum parish, and he wrote in his memoir that this experience strengthened his desire for ordination.[25] This was the year of the General Strike, a humiliating defeat for the Trade Union Congress and for the British working classes. Ramsey's view of the strike was unambiguous: "On the strike, my attitude was to be very critical of the government."[26] His approach to issues of social and economic inequality was invariably to take the side of the poor.

Having devoted his years at Cambridge so completely to Liberal politics, Ramsey found in the writings of Gore and Temple an intellectual tradition that merged rigorous theology with an awareness of social inequalities, class hierarchies, and the economic injustices which resulted from rapacious industrial capitalism. These concerns dominated the domestic policy of Herbert Asquith's premiership, particularly between 1908 and 1911. Chancellor of the Exchequer David Lloyd George's "People's Budget" of 1909

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[24] Ibid.

[25] Ibid., 38.

[26] Ibid., 41.

sparked a prolonged constitutional crisis that culminated in the Parliament Act of 1911, which subordinated the House of Lords to the democratically elected House of Commons. These political conflicts had occurred during Ramsey's childhood. Because he had been raised in a fiercely Asquithian home, his Liberalism was inextricably bound up with the activist spirit of those years. His involvement in politics declined along with the electoral potency of the Liberals, whose pathetic showing in the 1924 General Election was in no small part the result of Asquith's own enfeebled leadership. From Ramsey's autobiographical writings, it is apparent that he was unsatisfied with any theology that failed to grapple with social issues.

Ramsey spent his final year (1926-1927) at Cambridge immersed for the first time in the formal study of theology. He found it to be the ideal outlet for his intellectual energies after his aborted attempt at studying law. "I worked very hard with a concentration I had never before applied to any intellectual work," he later wrote. "I began the study as by no means a theological innocent, for I had got already some pattern of Christian theology in my mind drawn from my reading of Gore and Temple. While I was clear about the general pattern I was dissatisfied with the very conservative handling of historical questions by Gore, and wanted to find a more critical approach."[27] This dissatisfaction with Gore's historical ideas may explain Ramsey's attraction to the biblical theology of Edwin Hoskyns, whose meticulous scholarship became a model for Ramsey after he attended Hoskyns' lectures at Cambridge. He wrote that "the lecturer who thrilled me was Hoskyns. I have described his work and influence in *From Gore to Temple*. He stirred one to see that the New Testament is not just the basis of a

[27] Ramsey, "Cambridge, 1926-1927: Theology," unpublished document in the Ramsey Papers, v. 322, 44-53, 50.

theological system but a thing dynamic and explosive in itself."[28] Through his exploration of Hoskyns' writings, Ramsey not only found a model for his own work in biblical theology, but also encountered the work of another major early influence in the field, Karl Barth. Hoskyns translated Barth's *The Epistle to the Romans* into English in 1933 (five years after Ramsey's ordination), and Ramsey wrote that that work altered the course of his early thinking: "That work influenced me deeply for several years and it gave me a sense of the centrality of the Cross, the uncompromising idea of divine mystery and transcendence and a hostility to liberalism and humanism, though I clung to critical studies and was far from being a fundamentalist."[29] In this document, Ramsey overstated his "hostility to liberalism and humanism," although during his academic career he was known to take conservative positions on issues such as intercommunion, which he opposed at ecumenical conferences, and episcopacy, though his views on the latter softened considerably in the decade after his appointment to York in 1956.

Between 1930 and 1936, Ramsey instructed ordinands at Lincoln Theological College, where Hoskyns had helped to secure his former pupil a position as sub-warden.[30] Of this period, he wrote: "My theological outlook in the Lincoln days was formed of a combination of the Liberal Catholicism derived from Charles Gore and the Biblical theology in which Hoskyns was my inspiration."[31] This was an unusual combination, to be sure, although at this point in his scholarly career the influence of Gore had been temporarily superseded by that of Hoskyns and, to a lesser degree, Barth.

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[28] Ibid.

[29] Ramsey, "Lincoln: 1930-1936," unpublished document in the Ramsey Papers, v. 322, 71-81, 77.

[30] Owen Chadwick, *Michael Ramsey: A Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1991), 43.

[31] Ramsey, "Lincoln: 1930-1936," 73.

Given Ramsey's academic work in biblical theology, this was perhaps inevitable. However, it was while at Lincoln that Ramsey first discovered the writings of Maurice. This experience contributed at least as much to the formation of his mature social theology as had his earlier encounters with the writings of Gore and Temple.[32] His ideas about social and economic justice were further shaped by his experiences (1928-1929) as a curate in Liverpool, where "unemployment was the desperate issue" for much of the working class population.[33] At this point, his scholarly interest in biblical theology outweighed his devotion to social theology, just as his calling to the priesthood outweighed the promising career in politics and the law to which most of his academic career had been devoted until his sudden switch to theological studies in 1926. For reasons that are not clear, Ramsey did not write any memoirs of his theological scholarship and personal experiences during the last four years of the 1930s.

Ramsey's decade (1940-1950) as a professor of theology at Durham University was a vital period in his intellectual development, and helped to establish him as one of the Anglican Church's best-known theologians. He later wrote:

> In the Durham years my theological work developed and reached whatever maturity it had before I left the academic scene. My two Cambridge years [as Regius Professor of Divinity, 1950-1952] were only an extension and gathering up and putting into shape my ten years' Durham work. My outlook was strongly that of "biblical theology," and I linked it with a liberal Catholic pattern of doctrine, much as I had done at Lincoln. In my lectures, while I gave them a fair account of form criticism as well as literary criticism of the Gospels, I treated the historical questions in a way which now seems to me a little facile.[34]

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[32] Ibid.

[33] Ramsey, "The Cuddesdon Year, 1927-1928," unpublished document in the Ramsey Papers, v. 322, 54-61, 55.

[34] Ramsey, "Durham, 1940-1950," unpublished document in the Ramsey Papers, v. 322, 93-110, 96.

He added that his years at Durham were "a rather limited intellectual existence. The theological school became very much a Michael Ramsey affair in which I got my own way in the shape of syllabus and teaching."[35] He developed an intense interest in the debates over historical evidence in New Testament scholarship that bore fruit in his historical writings on Maurice and especially Gore. His reflections on this period indicate the complexity of his religious views, as well as his desire for an Anglo-Catholicism rooted in empirical history rather than High Church mythology. They also reinforce the significance of social theology in the development of his career.

In the 1940s, Ramsey participated actively in the ecumenical movement, and he could be inflexible on certain doctrinal issues. "I began to be regarded as something of a leader of Anglo-Catholic thought though of an independent kind," he recalled.[36] On apostolic succession, he admitted that he was "fairly rigid even to the point of discouraging intercommunion at joint conferences on unity."[37] The gradual liberalization of Ramsey's views on apostolic succession continued through the following decades. Several of the doctrinal positions which Ramsey had held dear in the first twenty years of his priesthood faded in significance by the time he entered the episcopate in 1952.

The late 1940s were busy years for Ramsey. In 1947, he declined an offer from the Scottish Episcopal Church to become the Bishop of Edinburgh, partly because of his lack of familiarity with Scotland.[38] At the same time, he was heavily involved on the committee that produced a report entitled "Catholicity" for the Archbishop of Canterbury,

[35] Ibid., 107.

[36] Ibid.

[37] Ibid., 108.

[38] Ibid., 99.

Geoffrey Fisher. "We thought that our report was constructive and creative," he wrote, "in that it did not claim that contemporary Catholicism represented the norm to which other traditions ought to conform. Rather the thesis was that there had been a primitive norm of Catholicism and that of subsequent schools the Catholic as well as the Protestant had deviated from original normative wholeness."[39] Perhaps in deference to some of the committee's more conservative members (including T. S. Eliot), the report portrayed the early Church as having a "primitive wholeness" in its historical and theological integrity that he later felt was "somewhat exaggerated and unhistorical."[40] Having been trained under Hoskyns, Ramsey always felt uncomfortable with imprecise handling of historical issues.

Ramsey's essay on the circumstances surrounding his elevation to the see of Durham in 1952 contained many important comments on his scholarly and pastoral ideal of episcopacy. When he received the invitation from Prime Minister Churchill, Ramsey consulted with both Primates in Britain, Fisher of Canterbury and Garbett of York. Cyril Garbett (1875-1955) was an autocratic but middle-of-the-road Anglican bishop who avoided High, Broad, or Low Church partisanship in his career, but who nevertheless had strong views on the importance of episcopal authority. As his words revealed, Ramsey was disturbed by his visit to Fisher but encouraged by his visit to Garbett. Fisher was not interested in the Durham tradition of scholarship and pastoral care that Ramsey cherished, and he was decidedly noncommittal about whether he believed Ramsey should

[39] Ibid., 100.

[40] Ibid.

accept the nomination. "[Fisher] certainly did nothing to encourage acceptance," Ramsey wrote. He continued:

> He said that there was of course a scholarly tradition at Durham and in this case the alternatives to myself were quite non-scholarly people. I asked him how valuable it was to have scholarly men as bishops and his answer startled me. He said that it did not matter much whether a bishop was a scholar or not and that the work was done quite well by men who were not. . . . I was struck by his non-recognition of the role of a theologically competent episcopate, and that this seemed to mean very little to him.[41]

The unspoken mutual dislike that had characterized their adult interactions probably played some role in Ramsey's response to Fisher's words. ("The effect of the interview was to increase my feeling that I should go," he recalled.)[42] However, Ramsey genuinely believed that scholarly erudition among the episcopate was necessary if the Church of England were to be taken seriously in the mid-to-late twentieth century.

Ramsey found support for this view from Garbett, whom he visited shortly after his meeting with Fisher. "I asked him about the possibility of a bishop continuing scholarly work and he was sure that it was possible," he wrote of Garbett. "He himself had guarded time for doing his writing and he hoped I would do the same. His encouragement seemed thought out and sincere and it was for me very decisive."[43] Ramsey pondered Garbett's words of encouragement in an extended memoir of his brief but fulfilling tenure as Bishop of Durham. The relative length (twenty-two pages) of this essay indicated the importance of the bishopric to Ramsey, who recalled his time there with unalloyed nostalgia for the rest of his life. He wrote that Garbett had expressed

[41] Ramsey, "The Invitation to Durham," unpublished document in the Ramsey Papers, v. 322, 112-115, 112.

[42] Ibid.

[43] Ibid., 113.

"great concern" that Archbishop Fisher "did not understand the Catholic side of the Church of England or realize its strength amongst Church people. [Garbett said,] 'I do not mean the extreme Anglo-Catholics, I mean the sensible loyal people who value our Church's Catholic heritage. Fisher does not understand what they feel.'"[44] In words that are indicative of the seriousness with which even many non-High Church Anglicans have regarded episcopacy, Garbett told Ramsey that he was "alarmed at the way in which Fisher talked about non-episcopal ministries as if there was no essential difference. He had himself thought always that while all baptized Christians were members of the one Church, the nonconformist denominations were not strictly churches."[45] Ramsey told Garbett that he shared his views of church order. He referred to Garbett in the essay as a "kindred spirit," and they would remain close throughout Ramsey's time as Bishop of Durham. Ramsey ultimately succeeded Garbett as Archbishop of York after the latter retired in 1955.

Ramsey felt a deep religious affinity for the see of Durham and its seat, Auckland Castle. His daily life and work there stimulated his historical imagination. He was inhabiting one of the most illustrious sees in Britain, and he was constantly conscious of his predecessors there, particularly Westcott, Lightfoot, and Henson, all of whom had combined outstanding pastoral care with serious contributions to Anglican history and theology. "It meant much to me to be living in Auckland Castle, and it was a place where history was always alive and vivid," he recalled. "I have never lived in a place where the past was so alive, and my great predecessors seemed like daily companions. I never felt

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[44] Ramsey, "Memoir of the See of Durham," unpublished document in the Ramsey Papers, v. 322, 115-137, 115.

[45] Ibid.

this so vividly at Bishopthorpe [the home of the Archbishop of York] or Lambeth. There was also in Durham a kind of genius whereby the past and the present, the visible and the invisible worlds are near."[46] He was conscious not only of the history of the Church in Durham, but of its economic and political history as well. Coal mining had been the engine of the region's industrial economy for over a century before Ramsey arrived in 1952.

Given his political and religious background, it was not surprising that the new bishop was very sympathetic to the concerns of the miners and their union. He recalled that "the city was throng with miners and their families," and that he "attended [The Annual Miners' Gala] every year and in 1955 I was the preacher."[47] Mining was a major part of the Durham mystique for Ramsey, who revealed that, in his mind, "there is a strange half-conscious sense of continuity between the rugged independence of Celtic Christianity . . . and the modern Durham industrial community."[48] At Durham, Ramsey imposed some balance on his busy pastoral and administrative schedule by inaugurating what he called the "one-in-four rule," by which he reserved one Sunday each month free from engagements. On those monthly days off, Ramsey devoted himself to reading and writing, just as Garbett had encouraged him to do when the two had met in 1952. When he accepted Prime Minister Anthony Eden's offer of the archbishopric of York in 1956, his feelings were mixed: "The thought that I was going to York and would still belong to the Church of the North was consoling. Yet the parting was none the less grievous."[49]

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[46] Ibid., 116.

[47] Ibid.

[48] Ibid., 118.

[49] Ibid., 136.

Throughout his autobiographical writings, Ramsey recalled the four years at Durham as the happiest time of his ordained life, and an ideal first appointment for him as a bishop.

Ramsey's confirmation as Archbishop of York was held at Canterbury Cathedral on 13 March 1956. John Kensit, an ultra-Protestant Anglican widely known for his writings and protests against ritualism in the Church, disrupted the ceremony and presented a document that denounced both Ramsey's Anglo-Catholic sympathies and his criticisms of Billy Graham's evangelical crusades, which attracted large crowds in Britain in the 1950s. Of the experience, which only deepened his antipathy for fundamentalists, Ramsey wrote:

> At Lambeth the ceremony was delayed by the presence of Mr. Kensit who presented a document objecting to me on two counts. a) I had failed to uphold the law in my diocese in dealing with the ritual illegalities in the parish of St. Mary Tyne Dock. b) I had shown unsound doctrine in my criticism of Billy Graham. Kensit read his document in the chapel, and Fisher ruled the objections out of order as the only questions under discussion were my identity and the legality of my election. The Kensit interlude was a little frightening.[50]

His five years (1956-1961) as Archbishop of York were something of an anticlimax after his time as Bishop of Durham, a position from which he was openly reluctant to depart. His autobiographical reflections on the period were sparser than those for any other time in his career apart from the late 1930s. He was involved in no major controversies between 1956 and 1961, and he rarely appeared in the House of Lords until he ascended to Canterbury. The decades of scholarly and pastoral labors would not be tested in the glaring eye of the British public and its media until the tumultuous middle years of the 1960s.

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[50] Ibid., 137.

3. Ramsey as Religious Historian:

F. D. Maurice and the Kingdom of Christ

Frederick Denison Maurice has fascinated subsequent Anglican socialists more than any other comparable figure. He was the rare writer whose ideas have proven so powerful that they transcend a notoriously obtuse prose style. These ideas inspired thinkers as diverse as Charles Kingsley, Gore, Temple, and Ramsey—a succession of Anglican thinkers and activists who owed a profound debt to Maurice. His contradictions and passivity exasperated even his most admiring contemporaries. The work to which Ramsey was most indebted, *The Kingdom of Christ*, appeared quite early in Maurice's career, and within a few years of its publication, its author felt little affinity for the ideas he stated in it. Despite this, Maurice's writings laid the foundation for the strongly Incarnational theology that dominated Anglican thought between the 1880s and the beginning of the Second World War.

The Victorian Christian Socialists provided the origins of much of Ramsey's thinking on social questions. His early immersion in the writings of many of its key figures shaped his career-long approach to social and political issues. British Christian Socialism was a middle-class and, before the 1890s, almost exclusively Anglican phenomenon, characterized by a wide disparity in ideas and goals among its different adherents. The first notable Victorian Christian Socialists included Maurice, Charles Kingsley, and J. M. Ludlow, who were active together between 1848 and 1854 mainly in the education of the working classes and the distribution of popular religious literature. Their commitment to ameliorating the conditions of the working classes ran contrary not only to nineteenth-century political economy but also to the evangelical social theology

that dominated the Church of England in the first three decades of Queen Victoria's reign. Anglican sermons during this period identified social suffering as the personal consequence of sin, which, when viewed within the wider context of a stratified industrial society, discouraged any concern among members of the Church for the well-being of the poor.[51] The association of poverty with moral depravity also discouraged the British government from taking action on behalf of the poor. The Christian Socialists labored against that ethos with mixed results.

The theological thread that bound together the otherwise disparate Christian Socialists was the Incarnation. To Maurice and his followers, Christ's Incarnation as a human being had "sanctified the mortal world . . . [and] heralded the coming of the Kingdom of God on earth, in which all were brothers and sisters in him and members of his Body."[52] The Incarnation required Christians not to shun the working classes for their supposed immorality, but instead to see their fellow human beings as members of God's kingdom, regardless of class. Only by doing that would they fulfill their charitable obligations to the poor and create a new society that rejected economic and religious strife. The interconnectedness of the human and the divine in Maurice's thought, together with his vague ideal of a Christian utopia, attracted a following for several years. After he, the Christian Socialists' nominal leader, withdrew from the movement in 1854, his influence waned until the 1880s, when a later generation of Christian Socialists looked to Maurice and the Incarnation as a source for their own social theology.

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[51] Cheryl Walsh, "The Incarnation and the Christian Socialist Conscience in the Victorian Church of England," *Journal of British Studies,* 34, July 1995, 351-374, 353.

[52] Ibid., 356.

The internal contradictions of the early Christian Socialists proved to be their undoing. They combined their advocacy for private social action with a strong opposition to any sort of political or economic transformation that might alter the hierarchical structure of British society.[53] Maurice opposed trade unions and strikes, a position that would have been unthinkable for the Anglicans who would identify themselves as socialists in the 1920s and 1930s. Only after the establishment of the Christian Social Union in 1884 did the movement advocate more interventionist government policies to reduce inequality, and even then it adopted that advocacy in a very gradual process. In his willingness to combine his public support for specific causes with parliamentary action, Ramsey was clearly the disciple of Gore and Temple rather than of Maurice and Kingsley.

Throughout his brief time as an active Christian Socialist leader, Maurice was torn between his political conservatism and the radical implications of his theology. He was not concerned with intellectual coherence or consistency. Some later commentators on his writings have chosen to emphasize his opposition to major socioeconomic change if this were to be achieved through parliamentary legislation or through revolution. The inequality and squalor of early industrial British society distressed Maurice. However, he believed that the solution to these problems was religious rather than political. Just as the various Christian denominations of Victorian Britain were often bitterly divided over doctrinal and institutional conflicts, so too was society itself compelled to conflict as a result of the same fundamental cause: humanity's failure to recognize the implications of

[53] Edward Norman has argued that the upper-middle-class paternalism of many of the leading Christian Socialists made them reject "collectivist" solutions to social problems in favor of voluntary aid. See Norman's *The Victorian Christian Socialists* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1987), 6, 9.

the Incarnation. Maurice fervently opposed parties, whether in politics or the Church. Partisanship, he believed, only further obscured the reality of the Christian community to which all believers belonged, and which they could realize only by awakening to the supernatural transformation that Christ had wrought.

If Maurice the political activist was content to leave the hierarchical structure of English society intact, Maurice the theologian was eager to eradicate all denominational and partisan divisions in British Christianity.[54] Maurice overturned the traditional nineteenth-century assumption that economic inequality was a reflection of working-class depravity. He desired to stimulate Christian fellowship among all classes, to remind the rich of their charitable obligations, and to encourage the poor to seek self-improvement. With his comrades John M. F. Ludlow and Kingsley, Maurice argued that the individual moral regeneration was the crucial first step towards the alleviation of social and economic distress. The early Victorian Christian Socialists steadfastly refused to assign any special moral qualities to a particular socioeconomic class. The Incarnation was, in

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[54] In an article on Maurice's social theology, Paul Dafydd Jones argued that current scholarship on Maurice has tended to overemphasize his conservatism while failing to locate the radicalism of his religious writings. Jones wrote that, despite Maurice's hostility to the idea of social and political change, "there was also a subversive dimension to Maurice's thought that recent commentators have not fully acknowledged." Jones limned the element of Maurice's thought which had the most significant long-term influence on Anglican theology and Christian Socialism:

> [Maurice's] subversiveness proceeded from a theological basis: a powerful and imaginative anthropology that conceived of all human beings as sharing in the infinite goodness of Christ, not the corruptive sin of Adam. Cast in political terms, this anthropology enabled Maurice to propose that radical changes to English society might begin in unexpected ways, animated by the agency of the marginalized, the downcast, and the disenfranchised. In light of the solidarity of all in Christ, church affiliation, class status, gender, and the like were no barriers to an individual inaugurating the transformation of English society. Anyone could challenge the competitive principle of political economy and promote the Christian ideal of cooperation. (p. 206)

See Jones, "Jesus Christ and the Transformation of English Society: The 'Subversive Conservatism' of Frederick Denison Maurice," *The Harvard Theological Review*, 96 (2), April 2003, 205-228.

their view, an inherently leveling occurrence, one that sanctified all of human society, regardless of class.

Because he believed that the divisions in English society had their origins in moral failure and self-interest rather than in any particular flaws in the British political system, Maurice had a naïve belief in the efficacy of social dialogue as a means of combating indifference to the plight of the working classes. He thought that English society could be transformed through personal interaction between those of different classes, and that this transformation was much more likely to occur through mutual understanding rather than through legislative attempts to create equality.[55] On the contrary, the Incarnation had already bestowed religious equality upon all Christians, regardless of class. Maurice, like Ramsey more than a century later, rejected what one scholar has called "a sin-based Adamic anthropology in favor of a grace-based and equalitarian Christian anthropology."[56] Maurice and Ramsey sought to awaken the men and women of Britain to the worth of the outcasts, the persecuted, the inhabitants of the fringes of English society. More than any other Anglican intellectual of his time, Ramsey contributed to a wider recognition of Maurice's ideas and relevance to the problems of twentieth-century Britain.[57]

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[55] Jones, 206.

[56] Jones, 215.

[57] In her biography of Maurice, Olive Brose acknowledged the contributions of both Ramsey and Alec Vidler to Maurician scholarship. Vidler wrote *The Theology of F. D. Maurice* (1948), which was followed three years later by Ramsey's volume on Maurice. These were the first major works to appear on the subject in decades. However, Brose criticized their writings for being "admiringly uncritical" towards Maurice, and commented on the disparity between Maurice's social conservatism and his appeal to liberal Anglican scholars in the mid-twentieth century:

> Oddly enough, some of those most likely to champion Maurice today are those who still endeavor to fit a predominantly liberal, activist, sophisticated version of Christianity into the self-sufficient, secular world of the latter part of the twentieth century. Not only was Maurice most

In the short but scintillating *F. D. Maurice and the Conflicts of Modern Theology*, Ramsey asserted that "Maurice wrote not as a defender of the faith—for the faith was, for him, always its own commendation—but as one who would uncover the faith which its defenders so often bury."[58] Both Maurice and Ramsey believed that the true essence of Christianity was often obscured by those who sought to exclude others from the faith on account of temporal rather than religious principles. In Maurice's lifetime, this exclusion took the form of indifference to the frequently horrific living and working conditions of the industrial working classes. Moreover, it affirmed what Jones called an "Adamic" view of sin to blame the least powerful members of society for their plight. Ramsey's attraction to Maurice lay primarily in their shared Incarnational theology, but he was also attracted to the latter's willingness to alienate the powerful by championing the humanity and equality of the powerless.

Ramsey's exegesis of Maurice's thought was a model of analytical clarity and precision, and no other writer has so successfully contextualized Maurice within the currents of nineteenth-century British and Anglican intellectual life, from Samuel Taylor Coleridge to Gore. More importantly, Ramsey used intellectual history to make

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> unsympathetic to such an attempt in his own day, but his war against orthodoxy had nothing to do with an attempt to update or modernize Christianity. (p. xvii)

Although her life of Maurice is an excellent work of scholarship, Brose here demonstrated little understanding of Ramsey's social theology or historical writings. Ramsey was keenly aware of Christianity's diminished stature in the predominantly secular British society of the 1960s. His interest in Maurice was not based upon a desire to transform the Church in order to appeal to those who were disenchanted with Christianity. Rather, he believed that Maurice's Incarnational theories and commitment to the working classes, if properly understood by modern Christians, offered a potent antidote to the reactionary social conservatism that often characterized the response of much of the British establishment to the social and cultural transformations of the 1950s and 1960s. Ramsey believed that Maurice's thought was still relevant to the problems of the second half of the twentieth century. See Olive J. Brose, *Frederick Denison Maurice: Rebellious Conformist, 1805-1872* (Ohio: Ohio State University Press, 1971).

[58] Ramsey, *F. D. Maurice and the Conflicts of Modern Theology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1951), 24.

arguments about the nature of Christianity, the Church of England, and the place of religion in modern society. In writing about theologians such as Maurice, Gore, and Temple, Ramsey was doing more than simply describing the evolution of Anglican thought in the century following Victoria's accession in 1837—he was also constructing a rationale for how the Church should approach social and political problems in the mid-twentieth century. He was not a hagiographer, nor did he pretend that his subjects were always correct in their conclusions. But the thinkers he most admired had articulated a vision of Christianity which Ramsey found very compelling and persuasive, and his historical writings were defenses of what he believed to be liberal Christianity's uniquely credible engagement with modernity.

Ramsey's dissection of Coleridge's influence on Maurice remains of particular importance for students of Victorian religious history.[59] Ramsey wrote that Maurice inherited and refined the following theological principles from Coleridge: "That theology is concerned with God Himself and not with systems of thought about Him; that theology is not *in vacuo* but the consummation of all other studies; that divine truth is accessible to every man."[60] The last of these principles was of particular importance for Maurice. Ramsey wrote that Coleridge and Maurice shared "a peculiar mixture of the conservative and the radical: a devotion to the old institutions combined with a wish to overthrow the

[59] See Brose, 24. Just as commentators have typically referred to Ramsey's intellectual debt to Maurice without making an effort to analyze the ways in which this influence manifested itself, so, too, have historians and theologians been prone to refer to Coleridge as a major influence on Maurice without bothering to explore the nature of this influence. Brose, the most ambitious of Maurice's scholarly biographers, also abdicated any responsibility for examining the impact of Coleridge on Maurice, although she distinguished herself by doing so while simultaneously criticizing other scholars for their failure to locate the nature of Coleridge's influence on Maurice. "The exact nature of Coleridge's influence on Maurice is very difficult to determine," she wrote, "despite the fact that all commentators on Maurice have dealt with it at length or assume it as axiomatic." The author's failure to dissect the intellectual relationship between Coleridge and Maurice is the greatest weakness in her account of Maurice's development.

[60] Ramsey, *F. D. Maurice*, 19.

more familiar grounds of defending them."[61] Like Coleridge, Maurice argued that the Church possessed and had to exercise spiritual authority, but he felt that the Church as an institution frequently misunderstood the nature of its own authority. In Maurice's view, the Church's authority lay not in its willingness to condemn sin, but rather in its willingness to affirm the Incarnation, the implications of which were inherently radical. This superseded any excessive preoccupation with private behavior or morality. "Often Maurice used the phrase 'Christ is in every man,'" wrote Ramsey. "These words do not imply that Maurice denies sin and the Fall, but that he will not allow the Fall to be the basis of theology."[62] In a passage that summarized Maurician Incarnationalism and, as I will argue in the next chapter, represented the foundation of Ramsey's own social theology, Ramsey wrote that Maurice believed that "God made man in his own image, the image which is perfectly known in Christ. And the life in Christ, while it is brought to us as the utterly new gift of a Redeemer, is none the less the life of our true and original selves as men."[63] Coleridge had been the most renowned living thinker of Maurice's youth, and the seriousness with which he took theology was an inspiration and a model to Maurice. Coleridge committed his immense prestige to his apologia for the intellectual respectability of Christianity and the status of the Church of England as the repository of ancient Christian tradition and integrity. The Coleridgean strain flowered in Maurice, of whom Ramsey wrote that "the Creeds, the Prayer Book, the Articles have never had a warmer adherent."[64] Maurice had internalized Coleridge's impassioned

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[61] Ibid.

[62] Ibid., 21-22.

[63] Ibid., 22.

[64] Ibid.

defenses of Anglicanism and the worthiness of theology as an intellectual discipline. His life's work, however, was not to write his own defenses of the Church of England, but rather to exhort his fellow Christians to live the principles which he believed Christ had taught.

In his account of the conflict between Maurice and Edward Bouverie Pusey over the doctrine of baptism, Ramsey demonstrated his eagerness to defend liberal Christianity against its critics. The controversy had centered on the question of the post-baptismal life of Christians. Ramsey placed the dispute in the context of the early Victorian religious revival, in which a resurgent Anglo-Catholicism emerged under the leadership of a handful of thinkers known collectively as the Oxford Movement. In *The Tracts for the Times* (1833-1841) the best-known members of the Oxford Movement (John Henry Newman, John Keble, Richard Hurrell Froude, and Pusey) had expressed alarm about the Church's reduced status in the wake of the series of political and social reforms implemented by Parliament between 1828 and 1832. The Tractarians, as the members of the Oxford Movement were also known, wrote not to understand modernity or to re-evaluate the place of the Church of England in a rapidly industrializing and increasingly democratic society, but rather to preserve traditional privileges. They condemned even minor advances in the religious and political rights of Britons. By the late 1830s, when Maurice emerged as a major Anglican thinker and social critic, the Tractarians were slowly sinking under the burden of their own intellectual inconsistencies and personal disputes. However, their passion for theological conflict and moral condemnation led to a memorable series of exchanges between Pusey and Maurice.

Ramsey acutely summarized the differences between Tractarian and Maurician social theology:

> Maurice was, like the Tractarians, contending for the dogma of the Holy Catholic Church; but his methods and his emphasis were different from theirs. They viewed the Church as the home of the redeemed, full of grace and truth, in contrast with a sinful age where grace was repudiated and truth denied. He viewed the Church not only as the home of the redeemed, but as the sign that God had redeemed the whole human race and that the whole human race was potentially in Christ. . . . [Maurice] looked upon the characteristic movements of thought of the age not simply as enemies to be fought in the Tractarian manner, but as half-lights to be cleansed and fulfilled.[65]

Like most extreme reactionaries, the Tractarians sought to entrench the right of a powerful minority to exercise control over a disenfranchised majority. They wanted to reserve privilege for those who had long held it, and expected those excluded from power to submit to the will of the privileged. If the excluded did not submit, the Tractarians feared, then society would collapse. Tractarians such as Froude were willing to countenance extreme and even violent measures to deny civil and political rights to non-Anglicans or to those who lacked the property that had been requisite to voting or holding office under the pre-1832 regime. By 1845, having recognized the futility of their struggle, the Tractarians either withdrew from the public arena (Keble), converted to Roman Catholicism as the last bastion of order in a world of chaos (Newman), or turned their attention to doctrinal scholasticism (Pusey).

The political element at work in Victorian religious debates was evident in the conflict between Pusey and Maurice. The issue at hand went beyond mere baptism; it concerned two opposing views of Christianity and the human race. Ramsey wrote that Pusey had long taken a special interest in baptism:

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[65] Ibid., 34.

> To Pusey the context of Baptism was the sinful world on the one hand and the Church as the ark of salvation on the other: in Baptism we are brought from the sinful world into the Church, we are given a new nature by regeneration . . . . To Maurice the context was a world not ruled by evil but one already redeemed by Christ: every child that is born is born into a world already redeemed, and in Baptism this truth is proclaimed and the child is put into relation to it.[66]

Even in the case of infant baptism, the responses were dictated by the authors' respective views on the Incarnation. The Tractarians were not interested in the social implications of the Incarnation. For them, to apply Maurice's view of the transformative nature of the Incarnation would distract attention from the legitimacy of the Church as the arbiter of moral behavior and religious doctrine. The proper role of the Church in society was to condemn secular infringements on its own power and authority. Ramsey summed up the differences: "While the Tractarians saw in the revolutionary forces of the time something to be kept at bay by the building of a wall of supernatural doctrine and other-worldly anti-rationalism, Maurice saw in these forces a set of aspirations to be met by churchmen upon their own level and, if not to be corrected and purged, at least to be spoken to with some appreciation of what they were 'at.'"[67] Ramsey's disdain for much of the Tractarian project was remarkable in such a prominent, historically informed Anglo-Catholic.

In a chapter entitled "Socialism and Eternal Life," Ramsey wrote his most detailed examination of Maurice's social theology, with all its apparent contradictions. Maurice's academic career had temporarily run aground over his supposed heterodoxy on the doctrine of eternal punishment. Ramsey argued that Maurice was a consistent thinker who based his social and theological positions on his understanding of the Incarnation:

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[66] Ibid., 35.

[67] Ibid., 45.

“[T]here was an underlying unity in Maurice’s doctrines about ‘Life,’ here in industrial England—and in eternity,” Ramsey wrote.[68] He continued: “Maurice is all of a piece. We cannot cut him into two and call one half theology and the other socialism.”[69] Maurice was a Christian Socialist *because of* his specific beliefs about the Incarnation.

Nowhere else in the lectures did Ramsey make his own political affinities more evident. He nurtured a pronounced dislike for right-wing populism and religious scolds, and in some passages sounded like the passionate Asquithian he had been in the 1920s. Of Maurice’s removal in 1853 from his professorships at King’s College, London, Ramsey wrote: “A press campaign against Maurice was raging, comparable in its stupid and discreditable malice with that which raged against Lord Haldane in the early years of the 1914 war.”[70] He defended Maurician socialism against its critics:

> It had nothing to do with collectivism, with the nationalization of transport or the leveling of incomes. It meant in practice two things. First, it meant commending the Christian faith to people by knowing and understanding their aspirations. In doing this, Maurice was too good a theologian to treat the Gospel as a panacea, or detach some portion of it and call it the ‘social’ Gospel. The Gospel remains the Gospel, with it correlative demand of brotherly conduct between man and man. Secondly, it meant inducing work-people to look after one another and themselves in a Christian way.[71]

As later Christian Socialists acknowledged, Maurice was not an orthodox socialist. His ideas were concerned almost exclusively with how human beings should interact rather

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[68] Ibid., 44.

[69] Ibid.

[70] Ibid., 43. Richard Haldane (1856-1928) was a distinguished Scottish lawyer, scholar, and Liberal (later Labor) politician. He studied philosophy in Germany, translated Schopenhauer into English, and caused an uproar after he described Germany as his “spiritual home” during the first year of the Great War. He resigned as Lord Chancellor at the height of anti-German sentiment in 1915. See Stephen E. Koss, *Lord Haldane: Scapegoat for Liberalism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1969).

[71] Ibid., 45-46.

than with the reordering of society. "Maurice was not concerned to sketch a vision of a Christian realm, or plan a political programme," Ramsey wrote. "He sought rather to discover the foundation of man's life in society; to say what this foundation is; and *to do certain things without delay* when his perception of the foundation demanded them."[72] If society were unjust, then Christians had to remind those who exercised power of their obligations to their fellow human beings, regardless of class.

4. Christian Socialism, 1884-1944:

From Gore to Temple

The longterm influence of Maurician Incarnationalism made its presence felt most powerfully in the writings of the revived Christian Socialist movement inaugurated by the founding of the Christian Social Union (CSU) in 1884. Anglicans comprised the CSU almost exclusively, and although the majority of its members were Anglo-Catholics such as Gore, it also attracted large numbers of Broad and Low Church members.[73] The later Victorian Christian Socialists were quite distinct from their predecessors. In the 1860s, Anglo-Catholicism and social activism on behalf of the British working classes forged a strong link between renowned "slum priests" such as Arthur Tooth, Alexander Mackonochie, and Charles Lowder. All of them were staunch adherents to the Oxford Movement and known in the public mind as "Puseyites," although the term was not apt in each particular case. The public began to associate a distinct form of High

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[72] Ibid., 47. The italics are in the original text.

[73] They were mostly adherents of what Peter d'A. Jones has called "sacramental socialism." In his definitive study of the Christian Socialist revival and the various religious organizations it spawned, Jones wrote that "the connecting link of Maurician theology and the zeal of Oxford Movement" was common to them all. See Peter d'A. Jones, *The Christian Socialist Revival, 1877-1914* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1968), 89.

Churchmanship with socialist activism on behalf of the working classes. After the early 1880s, there was no Christian Socialist in Britain as famous as Gore.

Gore had been seen as a coming man in the Church as early as his school years at Harrow. He took a First at Balliol College, Oxford, served as vice-principal at Cuddesdon, and then as principal at Pusey House, the Anglo-Catholic library and religious center at Oxford. By 1890, he was the most influential Anglo-Catholic thinker in the Church of England, and still only 37 years old. Intellectually, Gore served as the leading light of the Christian Socialist revival, and in 1902 he became the first Christian Socialist bishop in the Church of England.[74] But like the first Christian Socialist generation of 1848-1854, Gore and his contempraries' upper-middle-class (and sometimes aristocratic) social origins hindered them.[75] The CSU attracted many of the brightest and most admired Anglican clerics of the era, but it contributed little to the actualization of its social and religious goals beyond making Christian Socialism attractive to many middle-class Anglicans who may not otherwise have been interested in such a movement.

In 1959, towards the end of his tenure as Archbishop of York, Ramsey delivered the Hale Memorial Lectures at Seabury-Western Theological Seminary in Evanston, Illinois. He later published them as a book, *From Gore to Temple*. They constituted Ramsey's supreme achievement as a historian of Anglican theology, and remain a useful guide to his own social theology. His decision to focus on the five decades between 1889 (the year *Lux Mundi* was published) and 1939 (when the Second World War began) was

[74] He served successively as Bishop of Worcester, Birmingham, and Oxford before his retirement in 1923.

[75] Ibid.

not arbitrary. "I do not . . . doubt that the plan which I have followed has sufficient historical justification," he asserted, adding that "the years 1889 to 1939 have for Anglican theology a significant unity."[76] He argued that the theological movements that emerged during this period shared a few core characteristics, most notably a focus on the Incarnation, "isolation from continental influences," and a commitment to theological liberalism, which Ramsey defined as "the striving after synthesis between theology and contemporary culture."[77] In his introduction, Ramsey wrote that the distinctly Anglican elements of the Church of England's theology had diminished in the years after 1945, a process that may have had its origins in the ecumenical movement in which Temple played so large a role.[78] He wrote that "the times call urgently for the Anglican witness to Scripture, tradition, and reason—alike for meeting the problems which Biblical theology is creating . . . and for presenting the faith as at once supernatural and related to contemporary man. This witness demands a costly devotion to truth and a conviction that *theology is not merely a handmaid to administration, but a prime activity of the Church*."[79] The final sentence in this excerpt echoes almost exactly the same complaints that Ramsey made about Archbishop Fisher's disinterest in the theological necessities of Church of England.

Ramsey was seeking, in part, to stimulate a new understanding of the period between *Lux Mundi* and World War Two, which he believed would teach significant lessons for theology in the 1960s. "It is salutary to study the ways in which this witness

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[76] Ramsey, *From Gore to Temple*, viii.

[77] Ibid.

[78] Ibid.

[79] Ibid., ix. Italics added.

was given by the great Anglican teachers in the recent chapter of our history," he wrote.[80] In his first chapter, Ramsey outlined the cultural, religious, and intellectual contexts from which the authors of *Lux Mundi* and their associates emerged. In 1889, there was considerable "novelty" in having a major work of liberal theology written by High Churchmen, who had been among the most recalcitrant of doctrinal conservatives since the birth of the Oxford Movement in 1833. For Anglo-Catholics to "treat secular thought as an ally rather than as an enemy" was highly unusual:

> These writers had no doubt as to the uniqueness and supernatural character of the Incarnation. But they gave an unwonted emphasis to the belief that He who became Incarnate is the Logos who has been at work in the whole created world, in nature and in man, in art and in science, in culture and in progress, and all in such wise that contemporary trends of thought, like evolution and socialism, are not enemies to be fought, but friends who can provide new illuminations of the truth that is in Christ.[81]

Ramsey's general agreement with the *Lux Mundi* circle did not blind him to some of their serious theological shortcomings, which included a late-Victorian optimism about the inevitability of progress. After quoting some illustrative passages from J. R. Illingworth's contribution to *Lux Mundi*, "The Incarnation and Development," Ramsey criticized them as "strong sentiments of the complete harmony of religion and civilization, Incarnation and progress."[82] The connections Illingsworth made, Ramsey concluded, were too facile and reductive.

As a Christian who had witnessed the horrors of two World Wars and a catastrophic economic depression, Ramsey concluded that "[s]ubsequent years made this

[80] Ibid.

[81] Ibid., 3.

[82] Ibid., 5.

optimism incredible."[83] In their eagerness to embrace modernity and make it their own, writers such as Illingworth had been too willing overlook any boundary between sacred and secular. Contemporary critics of *Lux Mundi*, Ramsey pointed out, had argued that its authors had "blurred the distinction between divine revelation and the knowledge derived from the intellectual activity of man."[84] Illingworth in particular had been attacked for espousing a kind of immanentism, but Ramsey assured readers that a "careful reading" of his later works demonstrated "clearly his adherence to the duality of the natural and the supernatural."[85] Contemporary supporters of Illingworth condemned his critics for being "the voice of old-fashioned authoritarianism," but Ramsey responded that, on the contrary, "it now appears to have been prophetic of an issue increasingly alive in subsequent decades. It has been asked in recent times whether [late-Victorian and Edwardian] liberal Anglicanism . . . failed to do justice to the unique character of revelation."[86] Ramsey's own beliefs were not difficult to discern from such passages.

The authors of *Lux Mundi* had outraged most of the Anglican theological establishment, much as the authors of *Essays and Reviews* (1860) had done nearly thirty years before.[87] In his account of their backgrounds and motivations, Ramsey described them as "men of synthesis" rather than exponents of heterodoxy. Westcott, the venerable New Testament scholar, Bishop of Durham, and champion of the working classes who

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[83] Ibid.

[84] Ibid., 8.

[85] Ibid., 12.

[86] Ibid., 8-9.

[87] *Essays and Reviews* appeared one year after Darwin published his *Origin of Species*. Its editor was Frederick Temple, later Archbishop of Canterbury and father of William Temple, and its contributors were mostly Broad Church, particularly in their liberal theological orientation. They urged Anglicans to engage the new scientific discoveries and theories of the nineteenth century, rather than condemn them.

believed that “Christianity and progress went hand in hand together,” was on the periphery of the new liberal Catholic movement that Gore was spearheading from Oxford.[88] Ramsey wrote: “Here were seen to be united the piety and churchmanship of the Tractarians and the critical spirit which had found clumsy expression a few decades earlier in *Essays and Reviews*.”[89] For Ramsey, a theological liberal on most issues and a High Churchman with a strong attraction to ritual and historical continuity, the spirit of *Lux Mundi* was understandably appealing, not least as an alternative to Tractarianism, which he had frequently criticized as a form of reactionary fantasy rather than a credible response to the crises of the modern world. Though he could never embrace the doctrinal or political values of the Tractarians, Ramsey did admire their devotion to traditional worship practices as well as what he described as their “piety.” What they lacked was a social theology that emphasized mutual beneficence rather than institutional authority and the reinforcement of an “Adamic” view of sin.

Ramsey was of a generation of Anglican clerics who had come of age in a period in which the vision of *Lux Mundi* was the “dominant influence in Anglican divinity”:

> Here was the use of contemporary philosophy and a faith drawn from the Bible and the Fathers. It was an influence upon the general life of the Church no less than upon the course of academic theology. Here was a religion marked by the otherworldly spirit, which soon led to the creation of the Community of the Resurrection [in 1892], no less than the alert social conscience which created the Christian Social Union.[90]

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[88] Ibid., 1.

[89] Ibid., 11.

[90] Ibid.

Ramsey cited two paragons of this new theological ethos: Henry Scott Holland and Gore.[91] Gore was in some respects an unlikely leader of a liberal religious movement. Ramsey described him as "an autocrat, vehement in his decisions when once he had made them, and quick to lay charges of prejudice against those whose conclusions were not his own hard-found ones. Hence a streak of fanaticism limited the liberality of which he had been in his earlier years a pioneer."[92] His religious temperament was authoritarian, and after the turn of the century he subordinated his liberalism to his desire to discipline what he considered to be dangerous new forms of theological inquiry in the Church of England.

Ramsey considered Gore's apparent volte-face from liberal reformer to conservative martinet to be consistent with an aspect of his theology that set him apart from most of his socialist contemporaries: a profound pessimism about society and humankind itself. "Gore was no exponent of optimism or progress," wrote Ramsey. "The deep corruption in human nature could bid fair to wreck both socialism and democracy, and it was one of Gore's favorite sayings that 'Christ had a profound contempt for majorities.'"[93] The optimism of a Charles Kingsley or a William Temple was decidedly not for Gore. Ramsey wrote that Gore saw "human society as under scathing divine judgment unless it returned to the righteousness to which the Church

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[91] Holland (1847-1918) was a longtime canon of St. Paul's Cathedral and later Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford. He helped to found the CSU and was one of the best-known socialist clerics in England. Ramsey wrote: "Holland's genius was in lightning flashes, Gore's was steady and massive" (*From Gore to Temple,* 13).

[92] Ibid., 13-14.

[93] Ibid., 15.

must point the way."[94] Ramsey observed that Gore faced the same dilemma that has afflicted many youthful reformers: once he had advocated biblical criticism and reconciliation by the Church to the inevitability of change, Gore then sought to define the parameters of acceptable criticism and change—only to find that new reformers had emerged to push the boundaries far beyond his own definition of orthodoxy.

In a brilliant chapter entitled "Modernism," Ramsey traced the development of this most intellectually daring school of Anglican theology. Modernism had its roots in the same Broad Church movement that had produced *Essays and Reviews* and strongly influenced the authors of *Lux Mundi*. In Modernism, however, the Broad Church theological tradition demonstrated its own radicalism without the Anglo-Catholic trappings of *Lux Mundi*. "Modernism in the Church of England inherited the older Broad Church spirit," wrote Ramsey.[95] Among the tenets they shared were "the desire to separate inward religion from dogma, to study the Bible like any other book, to free the consciences of churchmen from rigid interpretations of subscription or from subscription itself, [and] to keep the national Church as comprehensive as was the variety of religious outlook among the English people."[96] Like the Christian Socialists, the leading Modernists shared certain core beliefs, but in general were notable for the diversity of their ideas. Ramsey emphasized their significant debt to the nineteenth-century continental Liberal Protestantism of Albrecht Ritschl and Adolf Harnack, whose theology he summarized as follows:

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[94] Ibid.

[95] Ibid., 60.

[96] Ibid.

> The essence of Christianity lay in the teaching of Jesus in Galilee about the Kingdom of God, which was received and entered by those who accepted the Fatherhood of God with its corollary, the brotherhood of man. That was the core of the Gospel. The doctrines of Christology and of atonement taught by the apostles were false accretions . . . . We must . . . discover the true Jesus, and thus complete the work of the Reformation by removing the remains of the husk so that the kernel will be plain to see. The Liberal Protestant view had . . . concluded that the elements of the Gospel tradition which contained high Christology, or miracle, or atonement doctrine or supernaturalism represented not what Jesus really did or taught but later interpretations of Him read back into the story from the standpoint of the developing theology of the Church.[97]

These Liberal Protestant ideas were integral to English Modernism, whose greatest advocate was Hastings Rashdall (1858-1924), a historian and philosopher whose final position was as Dean of Carlisle. He wrote a massive history of the medieval university, several other other historical works, and philosophical volumes on "ideal utilitarianism" which were highly regarded during his lifetime. He was also a member of the Christian Social Union for more than thirty years.

In Rashdall, the Modernists had an apologist whose erudition and intellectual powers had few equals in all of Anglican theology. Ramsey wrote that "Rashdall felt a missionary vocation to liberate the Christian religion from the hindrances which prevented its speedy acceptance by the modern intelligence: archaic dogmas, miracle, and the requirements of literalism in clerical subscription."[98] Rashdall believed that what passed for orthodoxy at the end of the nineteenth century "involved arbitrary or misleading interpretations of ancient writers."[99] Perhaps it was inevitable that Rashdall would come into conflict with Gore, the onetime-radical who now savaged the heterodox.

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[97] Ibid., 61-62.

[98] Ibid., 67.

[99] Ibid.

Gore regarded the tenets of miracles and divine intervention as one of the bright dividing lines that delineated the true catholic faith from imposture.

In the last thirty years (1902-1932) of his life, Gore fought bitterly against theological Modernism using much the same reasoning that his conservative elders had used against him in the wake of *Lux Mundi*. Ramsey wrote that Gore's suspicion of Modernism grew out of his belief that the acceptance of its doctrines was a slippery slope that would have long-term implications for the faith:

> He believed that beneath the Modernist rejection of the miraculous there was a distinctive philosophy which, derived from idealism or other types of immanentism, identified the natures of God and Man in such a way as to blur the distinction between Creator and creature. 'This is not a movement which must be satisfied with the elimination from the Creed of certain miracles, leaving the ideas about God and Man untouched. It is a movement which, as a whole, demands a trenchant rehandling of our doctrine of God and Man.'[100]

Until this point in his analysis, Ramsey in evaluating the conflict between Gore and the Modernists had been fairly critical of the former. However, he acknowledged the validity of Gore's criticism: the Modernists were indeed blurring the lines between human and divine, albeit with what he described as an "ardent piety."[101] He wrote that, in Rashdall's "distinctive christological theory," "[d]iety includes the human race, and the Nicene definition of Christ's deity and the devotion due to Him as divine are justified in virtue of His being the highest representative of humanity."[102] For Ramsey, as for Gore, this immanentism reduced Christ to "a figure with an ethical message, prophetic in a mild

[100] Ibid., 68.

[101] Ibid., 69.

[102] Ibid.

sense, but extraordinarily jejune."[103] Hostility towards immanentism was one of the recurring themes of *From Gore to Temple*.

Ramsey described the Modernists' participation in the 1921 Girton Conference as "sensational at the time."[104] There were inflammatory newspaper articles on the conference published daily. Ramsey wrote: "The importance of Girton for theological history is the exposition made of a distinctive Modernist doctrine by Rashdall and [James F.] Bethune-Baker. Their papers are perhaps its classic expression."[105] Rashdall delivered a paper entitled "Christ as Logos and as Son of God," which was subsequently published in *Jesus God and Man*, an important anthology of christological theology. In it, he argued that Christ had never claimed to be divine, that his soul had not pre-existed his birth, that he was "in the fullest sense *a man*," and that the Incarnation "implied" neither the Virgin Birth nor the omniscience of Christ.[106] For Rashdall as for most of his fellow Modernists, the vast difference between the Jesus of the Gospels and the Christ of the ancient and medieval Church was the crux of Christianity's dilemma in the intellectual environment of the early twentieth century.

Ramsey evaluated Rashdall's claims within the context of Victorian and Edwardian theology, and concluded that "there was little about them that was novel or devastating."[107] He displayed admirable scholarly impartiality in his conclusion that

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[103] Ibid., 70.

[104] Ibid. The Modernists regularly held conferences in Britain, and the theme for their 1921 conference was "Christ and the Creeds." Papers published in the *Modern Churchman* had already aroused media attention over questions of heresy.

[105] Ibid.

[106] Ibid., 71.

[107] Ibid.

Gore's bitter attacks on Rashdall after the Girton Conference had "obscured his own case by vehemence, and just a little unfairness."[108] Ramsey wrote favorably of the post-Girton debate on the implications of Modernist Christology, especially as it related to the nature of Christ's divinity. The debate was serious, equable, and erudite; it concluded with a resolution that affirmed the content of the Nicene Creed while condemning those who would limit the free exchange of divergent opinions within the Church. Despite his reservations about Gore's tactics in theological disputes, Ramsey credited Gore with being the only critic of Modernism to identify the full extent of its heterodoxy. A few months after the conference, the Modernist theologian H. D. A. Major responded to Gore in the *Modern Churchman*, the movement's journal. He directly addressed Gore's charges:

> Dr. Gore is correct in affirming that we believe that there is only one substance of the Godhead and the Manhood, and that our conception of the difference between Diety and Humanity is one of degree. The distinction between Creator and creature, upon which Dr. Gore and the older theologians place such emphasis, seems to us to be a minor distinction. . . . It is not a moral distinction at all, and we fail to see how one can base an ethical system upon it.[109]

Ramsey wrote of Major's comments: "There could be no plainer acknowledgment that Gore had put his finger on the issue. What is strange is Major's failure to perceive it to be an issue at all."[110] Unfortunately for Gore, many of his fellow theologians shared Major's relative indifference over this issue.

Concluding his chapter on Modernism, Ramsey articulated *why* the christological issue mattered so much to Gore, and later to Ramsey himself. Modernists were imprecise

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[108] Ibid., 72.

[109] H. D. A. Major, *Modern Churchman*, 11, October 1921, 357.

[110] Ramsey, *From Gore to Temple*, 73.

in distinguishing between humanity and diety in Christ, he wrote, because they believed in "the uniformity of nature as a principle *which controls belief about the relation of God, man, and the world.*"[111] He wrote that Modernism had been characterized by "the pursuit of a critical investigation and in the practice of a . . . religion marked by a sympathy with every manifestation of the religious spirit."[112] This emphasis on uniformity was crucial to the Modernists, who, in attempting to construct a theology that accorded with Darwin and the scientific consensus of late Victorianism, only made themselves anachronistic by clinging to these assumptions long after academic theology in Britain had already moved towards biblical criticism.

Ramsey attributed Modernism's rapid decline after the early 1920s to its rejection of "the idea that God does things in particular in history, in mighty acts of redemption and judgment."[113] He wrote that Modernists sought to "use the findings of the modern sciences and to insist that there is development in the understanding of the Christian faith," but their social theology essentially claimed that "the Kingdom of God could be identified with the moral and spiritual progress of men striving to do God's will in a world from which God seemed almost excluded."[114] The Modernists' inability to adapt to changing theological, social, and cultural values, free from what Ramsey derided as "arbitrary assumptions," spelled their inevitable demise as biblical theology came to dominate Anglican thought.[115] Ramsey nonetheless affirmed that Modernism's "task is

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[111] Ibid., 74. Italics added.

[112] Ibid.

[113] Ibid., 75.

[114] Ibid., 74, 75.

[115] Ibid., 76.

ever with us, for when shall we outgrow the difficulties of the twofold calling: to think and to believe?"[116] It was significant that Ramsey described the reconciling of thinking and believing as a "calling." He criticized both Gore and Rashdall for failing to reconcile them. He himself continuously sought to achieve that synthesis in his theology and in his pastoral role as a bishop.

Ramsey continued his account of Gore's ecclesiastical conflicts in a chapter on "Creed and Subscription," two issues that preoccupied Gore in his confrontations with radical schools of theology. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, scholars' efforts to clear away the christological accretions of the early Church led them to ask questions that made conservative bishops and theologians very uncomfortable. Ramsey argued that the doctrinal controversies of the early twentieth century had been both beneficial to the Church and representative of the liberality which he believed was Anglicanism's great strength. "In these controversies there was disclosed the characteristic Anglican temper in dealing with doubt in a time of transition," he wrote.[117] This doctrinal flexibility had its weaknesses, to be sure, but Ramsey insisted that one had "to ask whether its existence did not serve in the long run both the needs of intellectual integrity and the vindicating of the Catholic faith in its fullness."[118] Ramsey was unwilling to endorse any Christian theology which did not value scholarly inquiry, but he felt no affinity for theology that abolished the lines between human and divine. His own theology was too rooted in the Incarnation ever to affirm a Christology that reduced Christ to a mere ethical teacher. To

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[116] Ibid.

[117] Ibid., 78.

[118] Ibid.

do so would be to move away from actual theology into what he derided as "philosophy in disguise."

In his account of Gore's heated literary battle with Hensley Henson, Ramsey further explored the intersection between theology and church politics. His fascination with Gore's theology and personality, coupled with his willingness to criticize and often oppose Gore's assertions, made *From Gore to Temple* an unusually scintillating work of religious history. Ramsey explained that Gore's emphasis on the literal meaning of parts of the Creeds and on the reality of the miraculous had stemmed from his belief, consistent since his early essays in theology, in the overriding significance of the Incarnation:

> He had concluded on historical grounds that the evidence for both the Virgin Birth and the Resurrection . . . was overwhelmingly strong and that only a dogmatic prejudice against the miraculous could cause anyone to reject it. He felt that this negative prejudice was the enemy, and those who held it were guilty of a disqualifying perversity. To him the issue was of supreme importance because his belief in the love and righteousness of God, a belief tried and tested in . . . his keen sensitivity to the suffering of the world, was bound up with the vindication of the divine freedom and redemptive power in an intrinsically miraculous Incarnation attested by history. There was no manifestation of divine love in the uniformity of nature.[119]

In the excerpt from Ramsey's unpublished memoir of his Cambridge years cited previously in this chapter, he confirmed his devotion to Gore's theology while simultaneously criticizing the latter's historical assertions. He could not condone Gore's belief that "those who held office in the Church while reciting these clauses in a non-literal sense were dishonest."[120] That said, Ramsey wholeheartedly endorsed Gore's insistence on the divinity of Christ, without which the meaning of the Incarnation would be null.

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[119] Ibid., 79.

[120] Ibid.

Ramsey was critical of Gore's intransigence on questions of subscription. In 1914, Gore had sought episcopal confirmation "that the acceptance of the historical miracles in the Creed was a necessary part of the meaning of Clerical Subscription," wrote Ramsey. "He was vehemently concerned to force the issue as he himself saw it."[121] Archbishop Randall Davidson ("the sagacious ecclesiastical statesman") had intervened in the Convocation of Canterbury to thwart Gore's plans, at least in part. Davidson sought to reformulate the Convocation's resolution on the creeds a way that would allow dissenting consciences to affirm it. Ramsey wrote that Davidson "was no theologian. But he knew enough of the modern history of the Church to realize that orthodoxy can injure itself by policies of repression."[122] Davidson sought the *via media*, and Ramsey described the accommodating final draft of the resolution as "typically Anglican in form and temper."[123] While Davidson had succeeded in preventing a theological catastrophe in the Convocation of Canterbury, he could not prevent Gore from seeking out new enemies. Gore found a formidable one in Henson (1863-1947), a Fellow of All Saints who had served as Canon of Westminster and Dean of Durham until, in 1917, Lloyd George nominated him to the see of Heresford. The prospect of Henson's elevation to the episcopate spurred Gore to action. He attacked Henson for failing to meet the standards of subscription called for in the resolution of the Convocation of Canterbury.

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[121] Ibid., 81.

[122] Ibid.

[123] Ibid.

Henson belonged to no particular theological movement. Throughout his long and distinguished career, he pursued a theological course that was distinctly his own. Although some mistook Henson for a Modernist, Ramsey quoted Henson's own description of himself as a "latitude man who had strayed from the seventeenth century into the twentieth."[124] At the time of his nomination to Heresford, Henson was known for his advocacy of the Church of England's continued establishment and his antipathy to Anglo-Catholicism. He was also recognized for the liberalism of his views about creedal subscription and the miraculous. Ramsey wrote that Henson endorsed "the separability of the faith of the Incarnation from its accompanying miracles," while also affirming "the Lordship of Jesus to be worshipped as divine."[125] Henson was a complex and highly individual Anglican thinker—not a Modernist, yet not within the bounds of what Gore defined as orthodoxy.

When Lloyd George nominated Henson to Heresford, Gore (by now the Bishop of Oxford) led episcopal opposition to the nomination. According to Ramsey, Archbishop Davidson staunchly supported Henson's orthodoxy, and he was willing to resign as the spiritual leader of the Church of England were Henson's nomination to be rejected. The British press heavily publicized the conflict between Gore and Henson. In his classic biography of Archbishop Davidson, G. K. A. Bell devoted an entire chapter to the controversy. He confirmed Ramsey's argument that Henson's belief in the Incarnation was, to Gore, hollow given Henson's disbelief in miracles. Bell quoted an account from Davidson's diary of a meeting the latter had with Gore shortly after the nomination was announced:

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[124] Ibid., 83.

[125] Ibid.

> Gore admitted frankly that Henson is a firm believer in the Incarnation, but that Henson's belief in that great doctrine is accompanied by a disbelief in those miraculous events of the Human Ministry which Gore regards as essential to the Incarnational doctrine in its entirety. [Gore said of Henson:] "He believes Our Lord had a human father, and that His body rotted in the tomb. A man who believes that cannot, with my consent, be made a Bishop of the Province."[126]

After much wrangling, Davidson finally convinced Henson to write a statement affirming his belief in the divinity of Christ, although Henson remained ambiguous in his language about miracles. Gore accepted Henson's statement and withdrew his opposition to the latter's appointment to Heresford. Ramsey, on the other hand, discounted Henson's apparent recantation: "In the light of evidence now available from Henson's subsequent diaries and letters it is quite clear . . . that Henson meant neither to make any sort of recantation nor to affirm that he had believed in the miracles of the Creed."[127] In the wake of the Girton Conference, however, Henson attacked the Modernists (with whom he had been loosely associated on some doctrinal issues, especially in the public mind) for what he believed to be their attempt to "maintain Christ's deity only by deifying mankind."[128] Ramsey clearly approved of Henson's criticisms of the Modernists on the question of Christ's divinity.

Ramsey noted that William Temple's career in the Church had nearly been derailed over his inability to believe literally in the Virgin Birth or the Resurrection. Just as he had in the case of Henson, Archbishop Davidson intervened on Temple's behalf and ordained him despite the latter's reservations about the Creeds. Ramsey was enthusiastic in his endorsement of Davidson's approach: "A negative decision would

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[126] G. K. A. Bell, *Randall Davidson: Archbishop of Canterbury* (London: Oxford University Press, 1952; originally published in 1935), 857.

[127] Ramsey, *From Gore to Temple*, 85.

[128] Ibid., 86.

have deprived the Church in the one case of one of its greatest bishops and withal a very powerful preacher of faith in the divine Christ," he wrote, "and in the other case of one who was to become foremost in the exposition of orthodoxy with the creedal miracles as part and parcel of the whole."[129] As Ramsey observed, Temple's views evolved after his ordination; he eventually became a staunch proponent of biblical miracles, the Virgin Birth, and the Resurrection.[130]

Ramsey saw in the examples of Henson and Temple what he described as "the Anglican vocation": "to risk untidiness and rough edges and apparently insecure fences so that it may be in and through the intellectual turmoil of the time—and not in aloofness from it—that the Church teaches the Catholic faith."[131] Of course, one could write much the same about Rashdall and many of his fellow Modernists. Ramsey noted with approval the publication of *Doctrine in the Church of England* by the Archbishops' Commission in 1937: "Liberal theology was amply represented" in this document, which defined "traditional orthodoxy" as the belief that (in Ramsey's words) "the Virgin Birth is congruous with the role of Christ as the head of a new humanity and with the supernatural character of the Incarnation."[132] This precise formulation, steeped in Incarnational and more specifically Maurician theology, revealed its author's theological values. He approved of the document because it placed the Incarnation at the center of

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[129] Ibid., 89.

[130] For more information on the issues surrounding Temple's ordination, see F. A. Iremonger, *William Temple, Archbishop of Canterbury* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1948), 96-127.

[131] Ramsey, *From Gore to Temple*, 89.

[132] Ibid, 90.

the faith, while rendering belief in miracles secondary. For Ramsey, the divinity of Christ took precedence over all other theological considerations.

Ramsey argued that *Doctrine in the Church of England* was significant not only because it reaffirmed the Incarnation, but because it also demonstrated the failure of the Modernists. He asserted that Gore had been correct to warn against the radicalism of the Modernist Christology, but that he had been wrong to argue that any hesitation to endorse the biblical miracles must be rooted in a disbelief in Christ's divinity.[133] By recognizing but tolerating doubt about miracles, the Archbishops' Commission made belief in the divinity of Christ, and thus the Incarnation, the defining requirement for orthodoxy. Ramsey wrote: "More rigorous authoritative measures might have excluded Temple from the priesthood and Henson from the episcopate, and driven sensitive historical critics into positions of negation."[134] Despite his disapproval of Modernism, Ramsey believed that it had made a valuable contribution to the emergence of a more mature and balanced theology in the interwar period.

Ramsey observed in the first chapter of *From Gore to Temple* that the dominant doctrinal topic in Anglican theology between 1889 and 1939 was the Incarnation. Certainly, he considered the divinity of Christ to be the defining tenet in his varied conclusions about the dozens of theologians whose writings he examined. Any theology that disregarded the singular import of Christ's divinity was a theology that failed to recognize the implications of the Incarnation. Although he criticized Gore's "vehemence" and "fanaticism" over literal belief in the miraculous elements of the Creeds, Ramsey divulged his own theological sympathies in his rejection of Modernism

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[133] Ibid., 91.

[134] Ibid.

and Liberal Protestantism for their immanentism, which he described in his subchapter on Rashdall as "philosophy in disguise." To reduce Christ to a purely human ethical teacher was to abolish the Kingdom of Christ (to use Maurice's term) which the Incarnation had made a reality. As we have seen in his autobiographical documents covering his years at Cambridge, Ramsey had rejected any Anglican organizations or movements that lacked a coherent social theology based upon the elimination of social injustice. He believed that there could be no basis for any kind of social theology if the Church itself were merely a human construct handed down from antiquity and given its present form in the Middle Ages.

In a chapter on "Liberal Catholicism," Ramsey explored the dilemma that faced the Church after the end of the Great War in 1918. Many theologians recognized the urgent need for an Anglican theology that was intellectually credible. According to Ramsey, Modernism was declining and orthodoxy "had scarcely found an idiom in which to speak" to Christians, particularly in light of the unprecedented carnage of the war. "Much water had passed under the bridges since *Lux Mundi*," he wrote. "The task then undertaken needed to be renewed if men were to find a supernatural faith presented with sympathy to the perplexities of the day."[135] The author was always sensitive to evidence of theological conflicts between those who reaffirmed what he believed to be outdated doctrine, and those who saw the need for doctrine to adapt appropriately (which to Ramsey meant a form of liberal orthodoxy) to the new intellectual climate of the times.

Charles Gore continued to dominate Ramsey's narrative of the development of Anglican theology in the first half of the twentieth century. When he turned to the

[135] Ibid., 92.

interwar period, Ramsey wrote that Gore was exasperated by both radical theology and the innovations of a younger generation of Anglo-Catholics. He "found himself somewhat isolated, in spite of the great influence which he still exerted. New Testament criticism had entered a phase more radical than that in which he was at home."[136] In Ramsey's view, Gore had become so accustomed to the role of disciplinarian that it took some time for him to turn to creative theology again after his retirement from the episcopate in July, 1919. One of his main obsessions late in life was the historical veracity of the Gospels. Ramsey wrote that, for Gore, the historical evidence was "overwhelmingly strong, unless there be an *a priori* prejudice against miracle."[137] Gore's critics attacked him for "treating history in light of a set of [theological] assumptions," a charge to which Gore retorted that "it was his critics, historians more liberal than himself, who were making assumptions in their treatment of the records."[138] Although Ramsey had some sympathy for Gore's view, he refused to endorse the latter's historical assumptions. However, he did affirm Gore's vision of Anglicanism as a form of "liberal catholicism," in which the institutional and doctrinal traditions "must go hand in hand with the constant appeal to Scripture as the standard of doctrine and moral judgment (the two are inseparable in importance) and the constant concern for the intellectual integrity of the individual."[139] He continued:

> "Liberal catholicism" was, Gore believed, precisely embodied in the Anglican appeal to Scripture, antiquity, and reason. . . . It was for him virtually synonymous with Anglicanism as rightly understood, for the Church of England

[136] Ibid.

[137] Ibid., 95.

[138] Ibid., 95-96.

[139] Ibid., 100-101.

> in its inherent character appeals to Scripture and tradition and reason, and thus bears witness to the Holy Catholic Church of Christ in a way in which Rome (through its errors) cannot, and the East (through its intellectual conservatism) does not. It was a witness all too often obscured by compromises, and tremendous in its moral demands, yet embodied in the Anglican vocation from the first.[140]

As this excerpt demonstrated, there were passages where it was unclear in Ramsey's historical writings whether he was paraphrasing the views of his subjects or expressing his own. A consistent theme that emerged in all of Ramsey's writings on Gore was that the great Christian Socialist had been wrong on questions of historical methodology, but correct on the great social and religious questions of his time. His awareness of Gore's shortcoming never dulled his enthusiasm for the man's writings or his example.

Although Gore described his version of Anglicanism as "liberal catholicism," other Anglican thinkers whose theological proclivities were much more radical than his were eager to adopt the term as their own. They differed from Gore at least as much as they agreed with him. They turned to Roman and Orthodox ideas to supplement their Anglo-Catholicism, a move that alternately alarmed and infuriated Gore, whose religion centered on the Book of Common Prayer. On historical questions, the new liberal catholics considered Gore to be outdated and reactionary. Rather, they believed that rigorous criticism "demanded more radical questions and answers."[141] Overall, the new movement preferred a less stringent view of Anglicanism as the repository of ancient religion than did Gore. Ramsey wrote that the new liberal catholicism "meant less an appeal to Catholicism as the institution of the undivided Church than an appeal to

[140] Ibid., 101.

[141] Ibid. The words quoted are Ramsey's.

Catholicism as the phenomenon of sacramental religion down the ages."[142] The new liberal catholicism was also heavily influenced by Catholic Modernism, another factor that contributed to their theological divergence from the liberal but not radical Anglo-Catholicism that had emerged after *Lux Mundi*.

Just as the publication of *Lux Mundi* had augured the arrival of a new movement in Anglican theology, so did the publication of *Essays Catholic and Critical* in 1926 mark the emergence of the new liberal catholics. The book's editor was E. G. Selwyn (1885-1959), at the time a parish priest and later Dean of Winchester from 1931 until his death. Selwyn believed that supernatural religion could be combined with the rigorous criticism. Ramsey wrote that the "belief that the Catholic and Critical elements are necessary to one another inspired the writing of the book," which presented "less of a single coherent thesis than did *Lux Mundi* did" but whose "significance lies in [its] illustration of a method and temper."[143] What Ramsey found particularly interesting was the way in which the new liberal catholics dealt with the question of authority in the Church. "The older type of authority," he wrote, "was . . . that of pronouncements to be accepted, whether they be given by Bible or Church or Pope."[144] To the liberal catholics of the interwar period, this "idea of authority must now be jettisoned."[145] They posited that such a stance had little credibility in the times during which they wrote, and that authority had to be based upon reason as much as upon tradition or scripture.

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[142] Ibid.

[143] Ibid., 102-103.

[144] Ibid., 105.

[145] Ibid.

Ramsey observed that they presented two sources of authority in catholicism: authority derived from the Church as an institution, and authority derived from faith in the Jesus Christ of the Gospels. For Gore, the institutional element of Christianity was of supreme importance. Selwyn and his colleagues, on the other hand, endorsed the latter view, as did Ramsey in his analysis. "The Anglican way is the former: belief in Christ comes first," he wrote, "and from that belief follows the accepting of teachings of the Church, authoritative because of their congruity with faith in Christ and because of their being rooted in the experience derived from that belief."[146] Ramsey took the side of Selwyn over Gore, who had been the historian's greatest inspiration for seeking ordination in the 1920s. In their belief that faith in Christ was the basis of the Church's authority, he argued, the new liberal catholics were the true inheritors of the Anglican tradition handed down from Hooker. Ramsey asserted that the conflict between Gore and the interwar liberal catholics was as much about the nature of revelation as it was about authority. To liberal catholics, Gore had not provided a satisfactory answer to the question, "Why is the historical event necessary to revelation?"[147] Ramsey wrote that the liberal catholics argued that because Christians believe in "an actual interpenetration of the temporal by the eternal, the natural by the supernatural," then only Christ, in whom this "interpenetration" had been actualized, could be the fount of Christian authority.[148] The new liberal catholics espoused a form of Anglicanism that reaffirmed the Incarnation as the locus of the faith.

[146] Ibid., 106.

[147] Ibid., 108.

[148] Ibid., 108-109.

From Gore to Temple concluded with a chapter on William Temple, who, according to Ramsey's analysis, held many views on authority and revelation that were close to the spirit of the new liberal catholics' ideas. Ramsey wrote that, to Temple, kenosis "interested him less for what it suggests about the mode of the Incarnation than for what it suggests about divine omnipotence and love."[149] Doctrine was important to Temple primarily in how it affirmed the nature of God, which had been revealed to us in the Incarnation. Ramsey sought to clarify the methodological divergence between Gore and Temple. He wrote:

> [Temple] did not begin with dogma, he led up to it as the answer. . . . Here again is one of the contrasts between Gore and Temple: Gore, ever wearing the scars of doubt and conflict as to the love of God, but sure that the orthodox Creed with its miracles was the only one which made God and His love credible; Temple, serene in his faith in Christ, but searching long as to whether the orthodox understanding of the faith was the true one.[150]

Temperament played a major role in creating the gulf between Gore and Temple. "Whereas Gore had treated social problems partly in terms of a prophetic denunciation of evil," Ramsey wrote, "Temple, possessing as he did a doctrine of the State as well as of the Church, was more ready as a social thinker to trace the lines of a divine order of society."[151] The disparate methods of Gore and Temple were, Ramsey argued, evident in their teachings on the nature of a Christian social order.

Temple's career and social advocacy reached their height of influence during the interwar period, which also marked the decline of Modernism and the rise of the new liberal catholics. Whereas Gore felt the classic Tractarian suspicion of establishment (a

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[149] Ibid., 146.

[150] Ibid., 147.

[151] Ibid., 154.

suspicion Ramsey shared), Temple was quite content with the Anglican Church as he found it. “Believing in a divine order,” Ramsey wrote, “[Temple] had a high conception of the Church’s role to permeate society with the right conviction of its possibility, and this caused him to be far less antagonistic than Gore to the establishment of the Church.”[152] Ramsey wrote approvingly of the revival of a liberal orthodoxy in the Church of England during these years, a process to which Temple’s writings and activism contributed significantly.[153] He wrote that when Temple succeeded to Canterbury from York in 1942, “it is doubtful whether a theologian of such original power and genius had done so since S. Anselm.”[154] However, his sudden death in 1944 prevented Temple from witnessing the creation of the modern British welfare state, and from influencing the development of post-war Anglican theology.

In his epilogue, Ramsey argued that, though the theology of the period between 1889 and 1939 constituted a new era in Anglican thought, it nevertheless also “possessed many permanent characteristics of Anglican theology,” one of which was “the constant Anglican care for *Via Media*.”[155] Those who abandoned the middle way abandoned the Anglican tradition. He wrote of this doctrinal and temperamental strain in Anglican history:

> It is seen in the choice of the middle ground between Rome and Geneva. It is seen in the dislike of pressing aspects of theology with the ruthless logic of a self-contained system. It is seen in the tendency for mediation between schools of thought or religious movements within, or without, our Church. It is seen in the instinct for distinguishing doctrines of lesser and greater import, a bequest of

[152] Ibid.

[153] Ibid., 156-157.

[154] Ibid., 160.

[155] Ibid., 164-165.

> Hooker to the ages which followed him. . . . It was present in Gore, though it was not his most characteristic gift. It was markedly present in . . . Temple himself. It assisted Anglican coherence and continuity.[156]

The Anglican commitment to the concept of *via media* was a constant theme in Ramsey's historical writings. *Via media* as Ramsey defined it was the guiding principle not only in Anglican theology through the centuries, but also in Anglican religious life itself. It was the foundation upon which the entire Anglican edifice rested. He specifically linked the rationality and moderation of Anglican Christianity to its ideal of *via media*, and when combined with Maurician Incarnationalism, there was a definite congruity between Ramsey's historical vision of Anglicanism and his handling of social and political issues in the 1960s.

5. *The Anglican Spirit*

During his years as Archbishop of York, Ramsey wrote a short essay on the relationship between two of his most distinguished predecessors in the see of Durham, Joseph Barber Lightfoot (1828-1889) (who served from 1879 to 1889) and Brooke Foss Westcott (who served from 1890 to 1901). According to Ramsey, Westcott grappled with religious problems through theology, whereas Lightfoot did so through historical research; as a result, neither fully understood the other on an intellectual level.[157] In his essay, Ramsey provided a fascinating insight into his own intellectual development. During his tenure as a canon of Durham Cathedral and a professor of theology at Durham University in the 1940s, Ramsey had become increasingly interested in the history of Anglican thought. He produced several historical works that would become classics in

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[156] Ibid., 165-166.

[157] Ramsey, unpublished essay on Westcott and Lightfoot, Ramsey Papers, v. 321, 102-103.

the field of Anglican intellectual history. As a historian, Ramsey combined a massive knowledge of Anglican theology with a gift for analyzing complex ideas within broader historical contexts, whether intellectual, political, or religious.

In 1979, five years after his retirement from Canterbury, Ramsey addressed several topics in Anglican history from the Reformation to the middle of the twentieth century in a series of lectures which he delivered at Nashotah House, a seminary of the American Episcopal Church. The lectures were posthumously collected and published in 1991 under the title *The Anglican Spirit*. "My purpose in this book," wrote Ramsey, "is to discuss the historical origins of Anglicanism," and though his analysis was more diffuse than in his more ambitious earlier works such as *From Gore to Temple*, these valedictory essays indicated no diminution in their author's enthusiasm for his topic.[158] The Anglicanism that he presented in *The Anglican Spirit* was thoroughly Ramseyan in its avoidance of doctrinal rigidity. To him, this characteristic had been at the heart of Anglican religious and intellectual life since the Elizabethan Settlement.

Ramsey began *The Anglican Spirit* by explaining how a distinctly Anglican theological tradition had emerged in the late sixteenth century. He credited this to Richard Hooker (1554-1600), the late-Elizabethan priest and intellectual architect of Anglicanism in whom Ramsey found much to admire. In his *Laws of Ecclesiastical Polity*, Hooker pioneered an exposition of Anglicanism as the *via media*, catholic in its sacramentalism, episcopacy, and historical continuity, but Protestant in its emphasis on Scripture, theology, and rejection of Rome. No other Anglican thinker from the Elizabethan period approached Hooker's influence. Ramsey wrote that Hooker's thought

[158] Michael Ramsey, *The Anglican Spirit* (Cambridge, MA: Cowley Publications, 1991), 11.

was characterized above all by "a belief in authority mingled with a great distrust of infallibility," which he described as "an honest Anglican characteristic."[159] Ramsey the historian of theology had an evident affinity for Hooker and what he represented within "the Anglican spirit." Hooker, he continued, had taught that

> divine revelation does not address itself to human souls in a kind of vacuum or by a take-it-or-leave-it process. No, the natural order is God's own creation. There is a divine reason present in the universe, operating in lots of different ways, whereby God bears witness to His own presence and activity. This indwelling of divine reason in the created world operates especially in the mind and the conscience of men and women. Thus revelation is a divine activity that evokes and calls for our own powers of reason and conscience, because those powers . . . are themselves God-given.[160]

Ramsey located the origins of the Anglican Incarnational tradition (which he described as "first place in Anglican theology . . . through the centuries") in Hooker's strictures against the condemnation of society and the natural world as evil or ungodly in themselves.[161] This would continue to be an important touchstone for subsequent Anglican theologians. Hooker formed many of his ideas in reaction to Elizabethan Puritanism, but Maurice later wrote similarly to discountenance ideas of early Victorian Evangelicalism. What united their thinking across the centuries, and what united Ramsey to them, was their common belief in the "indwelling of divine reason in the created world." As a historian of ideas, Ramsey persistently emphasized that indwelling. Between 1956 and 1974, it would inform his participation in social and political controversies.

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[159] Ibid., 19.

[160] Ibid., 21.

[161] Ibid.

In a chapter entitled "Scripture, Reason, and Tradition," Ramsey continued to explore the influence of Hooker, this time in the formation of Anglican doctrine on Scripture's role in Christian religious life. As a biblical theologian by training, Ramsey had a special interest in this topic. He attributed to Hooker a fundamental Anglican doctrine on Scripture: that it "tells us what is necessary for salvation, but it is not a source of authority for countless other things as well."[162] There was considerable ambivalence in Hooker's ideas about Scripture, as there was in his writings on Church authority.

This theological ambivalence towards authority has been one of the pillars of Anglican thought since Hooker's time, and it has been alternately a source of strength and of weakness throughout the history of the Church of England. Historically, it has been a catalyst for religious conflict and, in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries when the Church was a powerful political and legal institution, even for large-scale social disruption.[163] However, from the Glorious Revolution until the religious conflicts of the early Victorian period, the classically Anglican penchant for "latitude" allowed the Church to exist in a state of relative truce with the various Protestant sects in Britain. Ramsey criticized the fundamentalism of some Victorian Anglicans, who responded to the challenges of the new scientific and scholarly advances of the time by advocating a biblical literalism "that the Anglican formularies did not require and that Richard Hooker certainly would have repudiated."[164] In his historical writings as well as in his theology, Ramsey was prone to view fundamentalists with contempt or discomfort. As a historian

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[162] Ibid., 24.

[163] Ibid., 33-34.

[164] Ibid., 32.

he understated the longterm influence of fundamentalist strains in Anglicanism such as the Oxford Movement, as well as the revived Evangelicalism which peaked in the 1850s but remained a formidable presence in the Church until at least the 1880s. By the middle of the twentieth century, the Church had been so thoroughly diminished as a force in English society that its internal debates over such doctrinal questions were relevant to only a small number of adherents.

In his assessment of Edward Bouverie Pusey, the nominal leader of the Anglo-Catholic movement after John Henry Newman's conversion to Roman Catholicism in 1845, Ramsey revealed much about his own religious proclivities. He emphasized the "weaknesses and defects" of the Puseyites, "from which later Anglican theology had to emerge."[165] To Ramsey, these weaknesses and defects included an overly literal approach to the Bible and a reactionary view of Church history for which the archbishop had little sympathy.[166] The scholasticism of the Puseyite mind, with its fanatical preoccupation with doctrinal questions and its tendency to view the "unity of the Church very much in institutional terms," left little room for the Maurician Incarnationalism to which Ramsey subscribed.[167] Pusey's own private worship practices were austere in the extreme, a reflection of a pathological preoccupation with human sinfulness that surpassed even that of the most dogmatic Evangelicals, and which permeated the religion of many of his followers as well. Ramsey's allegiance to the traditional elements of

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[165] Ibid., 65.

[166] Ibid.

[167] Ibid., 68.

Anglican High Churchmanship was unassailable, but he found the arid doctrinal purity of Puseyite Anglo-Catholicism to be intellectually unacceptable.

Apostolic succession was an issue of extreme import to the leaders of the Oxford Movement. The credibility of the Church of England as an embodiment of ancient catholicism depended on an unbroken line of episcopacy reaching back to the original bishops of the Church, the apostles of Christ. Apostolic succession was what separated Anglicanism from Protestant sects, along with the sacraments and the liturgy. Although Ramsey appreciated apostolic succession, he did not assign to it a preeminent role in Anglican religious life. In his analysis of the Tractarian and Puseyite obsession with apostolic succession, for example, Ramsey wrote that their "view of the apostolic succession of the ministry was lopsided and out of context," and that they "spoke of the apostolic succession as if it were the principal test of the presence of the Holy Catholic Church, the thread on which everything else hung."[168] A "lopsided" view of historical questions would also be one of Ramsey's main criticisms of Charles Gore.

Apostolic succession was only one issue over which Ramsey was willing to take a flexible stance relative to his more conservative Anglo-Catholic predecessors and peers. The conservative Anglo-Catholic affinity for Roman Catholicism (as well as the Anglo-Catholic propensity for conversion to Rome) had always been rooted in the authoritarianism common to both traditions. Puseyites and their twentieth-century successors rejected the episcopal supremacy of the papacy, but constructed a body of doctrine that they hoped would serve as a substitute for papal authority. In addition to apostolic succession, they engaged in theological disputes over baptismal regeneration,

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[168] Ibid.

auricular confession, and the role of the British government in the appointment of bishops. Ramsey aligned himself with the Anglican tradition of Maurice, early Gore, and Temple rather than with the Oxford Movement. For example, Ramsey never considered conversion to Rome, nor did he agonize over the historical integrity of the post-Reformation Church of England. To him, these questions were a distraction from the true work of the Church.

In *The Anglican Spirit*, Ramsey bypassed much of the church history of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries in his haste to arrive at his true interest, the nineteenth century. In his lecture on F. D. Maurice, Ramsey placed the Victorian theologian within the broader context of mid-nineteenth-century Anglican theology. The contrast he drew between Maurice and the Oxford Movement was illuminating: "Now the difference between Maurice's method and the Tractarian method was this: the latter started with revelation and said, 'Here is the revealed truth about the Church'—and everyone who disagreed was, of course, in great error."[169] Maurice's method, however, was "inductive," in that it endorsed the belief that all of the goals of modern theology "would find their realization within the family of a universal society ordained and constituted by God."[170] The author's distrust for authoritarian religion was apparent in his almost disdainful analysis of Tractarian doctrine.

The Tractarians had stressed the exclusivity of the Anglican Church, whose institutional and doctrinal purity they were determined to protect. The historical and hierarchical boundaries they constructed around the Church were intended to differentiate

[169] Ibid., 70.

[170] Ibid., 70-71.

it from other Protestant denominations and from Roman Catholicism. Maurice's goal, on the other hand, was to transcend these same boundaries by affirming a common bond among all Christians in the Kingdom of Christ. To illustrate Maurice's method, Ramsey used the example of an ardent Protestant whose devotion to the idea of justification by faith "becomes a kind of shibboleth he worships."[171] According to Maurice, this sort of religion was an obstacle to the realization of Christ's kingdom. Ramsey asked: "Would not this Protestant do better to find himself within the company of the redeemed, within the divine family of people of very different kinds of experience and language? There he would find that fulfillment of faith about which he cares so much."[172] Maurice and the Oxford Movement responded with two different methods to the same religious crisis: the precarious place of religion in nineteenth-century British society. For the Tractarians, modernity represented the eradication of the social and political structures of the old social order, as well as the infringement of Anglican supremacy in those areas of the British Isles where Anglicanism was the established religion. For Maurice, it represented the opportunity for an entirely new form of Christian society, although he rejected the need for major social and political reforms.

Ramsey analyzed Maurice's "method" of abolishing sectarian divisions within British Protestantism. Each denomination based its identity upon tenets that it believed differentiated it from other sects. The key to transcending sectarianism was to enable Protestants of divergent beliefs to see in a unified Christian society that which they believed was contained only in their own denomination. As an example, Ramsey considered a hypothetical meeting between Maurice and a Unitarian. What could the

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[171] Ibid., 71.

[172] Ibid.

former teach the latter about the Kingdom of Christ? Ramsey wrote that Maurice would teach that "unity means the richness of the united life, of an indwelling Father, Son, and Spirit, reflected in turn in the life of a human society that mirrors the Trinity in human life."[173] The use of the word "indwelling" reflected the Incarnational aspect of a Maurician society. "Here then is a simple account of Maurice's method," Ramsey wrote:

> He meets people on their own ground and attempts to show that the Christian church, not as an exclusive institution but rather as an outreaching family, brings fulfillment of all these different aspirations which, though by themselves inadequate, do indeed have to be respected. . . .
> Because while [the Tractarians] were interested in affirming a society of the redeemed, standing over against a hostile world, Maurice himself was interested in affirming that the visible church was a sign that God had redeemed all humanity.[174]

Ramsey observed that the kingdom which Maurice envisioned would not be reserved exclusively for Christians: "The fact of redemption and the fact of the church, said Maurice, proclaims that Christ is the Lord of all people, and everyone is potentially within the Christian family already."[175] The Incarnation was such a transformative event that its implications transcended not only sectarianism within Christianity, but even Christianity itself.

Ramsey wrote that Maurice's emphasis on the universality of the kingdom of Christ "annoyed" the Tractarians, especially in the case of baptism.[176] "Maurice . . . emphasized the divine presence in everyone," he wrote. "Not infrequently he used the phrase 'Christ is in every man,' a strong affirmation of the indwelling presence of the

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[173] Ibid.

[174] Ibid., 72.

[175] Ibid.

[176] Ibid.

logos everywhere."[177] To the Tractarians, baptism was one of the dividing lines between those who were members of the true faith and those who were not. This was consistent with their views on the importance of institutional tradition and prerogative in the Church of England. For Maurice, however, "the great thing about baptism was its proclamation that Christ has redeemed all children and that all children are potentially saved," Ramsey wrote. "He had his eye on its potential significance for all humanity, rather than on its immediate significance for those who accept it and are saved."[178] Ramsey wrote that Maurice was impatient with those who saw ritual and doctrinal integrity as the most important aspects of Christian religious life. Maurice believed that this led to a dangerous preoccupation with religion rather than with God. The distinction was critical, both to Maurice and to Ramsey, who wrote that "to the intense religious temper of the last century in England, and in America, too, for that matter, religion and God had become more or less identified. So Maurice's language would not have been readily understood when he stated, 'The one thought that possesses me the most is this, that we have been dosing our people with religion, when what they want is not this but the living God.'"[179] Like Maurice, Ramsey the historian was always keen to disentangle what he considered to be erroneous conflations in the public's understanding of Christian doctrine.

In his concluding words on Maurice in *The Anglican Spirit*, Ramsey briefly contemplated the significance of the trinity in Maurice's theology and political activism.

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[177] Ibid.

[178] Ibid.

[179] Ibid., 73.

"Finally it must be noted that the theme of Christian Socialism was to Maurice an intensely theological one," he wrote.[180] Maurice's understanding of the trinity stressed its unity, which he believed was "the source of human fellowship in those repent of their self-centered isolation and discover the true principle of their being."[181] The "Triune God" had created humankind in its own image, Ramsey wrote, and "the likeness of His eternal charity dwells in the human race. . . . Thus Christian Socialism was to Maurice a passionate expression of the faith of the Trinity about which he cared so much."[182] Ramsey did not explore the trinitarian aspects of Maurice's thought in depth, but his paragraph on the topic demonstrated his fascination with the manner in which Maurice's theological interests shaped his entire approach to social activism. Through his theological writings, Maurice came to see nineteenth-century British society in a radically new way, one that inspired some of the most brilliant minds of the late Victorian period to follow his lead and carry on his work.

In his chapter on "Charles Gore and Liberal Catholicism," Ramsey examined Gore's career within the context of what he described as "the serious area of intellectual conflict in the Victorian period."[183] He defined this as "the problem of holding together the 'givenness' of God's revelation in Christ and salvation through the Christian history, on the one hand, and on the other hand the exploration of the meaning of the world through the rapidly growing sciences."[184] This was Gore's goal in compiling *Lux Mundi*.

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[180] Ibid., 76.

[181] Ibid.

[182] Ibid.

[183] Ibid., 83.

[184] Ibid.

He sought a synthesis of modern scholarship and catholic Christianity, and of the natural and the supernatural. The Incarnation played a vital role in Gore's attempts at synthesis. Ramsey wrote:

> In the context of the doctrine of creation, Christ is presented as both natural and supernatural. Natural, yes—Christ is part of and the climax of a divine process in history. As organic nature fulfills the potentialities of inorganic nature, and humanity fulfills the potentialities of organic nature, so Jesus, when he appears in history, fulfills the potentiality of the whole series: subhumanity, humanity, the New Humanity. You see, it is one of a series. And so Charles Gore dared to say that the Incarnation of Christ is something natural, but at the same time supernatural.[185]

Although Gore's critics attacked him for portraying Christ as part of the natural world, Ramsey countered that there was a "strongly evangelical note that breaks into the affirmation that Jesus and the Incarnation are both supernatural and natural."[186] Gore insisted on the reality of the supernatural, including a literal belief in biblical miracles, and this aspect of his thought gradually alienated him from many of his more doctrinally liberal colleagues in the Church of England, particularly after the turn of the twentieth century.

Ramsey wrote that Gore placed "the emphasis on the supernatural" because he believed that the Incarnation was best understood as a "supernatural intervention."[187] A belief in the miraculous was, for Gore, not only "totally congruous with the fact of the Incarnation," but "an inevitable, integral part of the Incarnation."[188] Why was this significant? "Because [miracles] emphasized the divine freedom in the process of God's

[185] Ibid., 84.

[186] Ibid., 85.

[187] Ibid.

[188] Ibid.

putting the world right," Ramsey wrote. "Human beings have misused freedom in disrupting the created world in disastrous ways."[189] To disbelieve in miracles was to call into question the entire concept of an all-powerful God, in whose image we were created. Gore stressed the human inability to grasp fully the ways of the divine. Our limited human ability to comprehend God's ways compelled many otherwise committed Christians to question the reality of miracles, he claimed. Gore believed that miracles were "the way God uses his freedom, which is not subject to known physical laws, in the process putting to rights a world that has gone radically astray," Ramsey wrote. "A miracle is new to what we have known and experienced so far, but perhaps it is not new to some higher purpose of God, which for all we know may be just as rational as any of our ideas."[190] The significance of the Incarnation lay in the divine becoming fully human; the supernatural element was fundamental to that process. Those who criticized Gore for positing that the Incarnation was both natural and supernatural either overlooked or misunderstood the ways in which he gave precedence to the latter.

In his analysis of Gore's doctrine of kenosis, Ramsey demonstrated his sympathy for liberal Anglican theology. As a historian, he was always eager to defend figures who advocated a more rational faith and sought to revise dogma to reflect the modern world. In this case, he defended the work of a scholar who delineated between archaic ideas about Christ and more intellectually credible (although still orthodox) views of his life and work. The well-known example which Gore addressed was the question of whether Christ really believed that Jonah had been in the belly of a whale. Gore argued that, in

[189] Ibid.

[190] Ibid.

becoming fully human, Jesus was limited in his understanding of science to the general knowledge of his contemporaries during his lifetime. Of the kenotic Christ that Gore conceived, Ramsey wrote: "While He had the mind of God in perfectly revealing God's character and purpose, he was not there to anticipate all knowledge, all sciences, all human investigations. In fact, in such matters Jesus was not setting out to teach humanity, for He had only the knowledge of his time."[191] Ramsey observed that, after *Lux Mundi*'s publication in 1889, the doctrine of kenosis was widely accepted among Anglican theologians. "The Anglican teachers of that period," he wrote, "did not hesitate to combine a belief in the divine Christ with a belief in Christ's total participation in the conditions of human life."[192] The "self-emptying" (to use Gore's phrase) of kenosis required what Ramsey referred to as "divine humility," an indication of the love that God felt for humankind.

Ramsey commented admiringly on the comprehensiveness of the *Lux Mundi* school, which he wrote "could claim a great symmetry and coherence."[193] He believed that two main ideas motivated Gore and his followers: doctrinal development and historical authenticity. He argued that the Gore's theories about kenosis were part of a liberal doctrinal trend in Anglicanism, which stressed that "doctrine must be open, accessible to the faithful at every stage of history."[194] New insights may be gleaned about events that took place in antiquity, and centuries may pass before doctrine is fully refined. Ramsey used the Council of Nicea as an example of doctrine being codified

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[191] Ibid., 87.

[192] Ibid.

[193] Ibid., 88.

[194] Ibid., 89.

centuries after the death of Christ. He wrote of the liberal Anglican school to which Gore belonged:

> If in the apostolic age, for instance, Jesus was already being worshipped as divine, then what happened several centuries later at the Council of Nicea was the outcome—the development, the intellectual expression—of something that was already present at a much earlier stage. . . .
> Characteristic of the Anglican view is this: it allows for development in doctrine because it does not hold a "fundamentalist" position. Yet at the same time, development is always checked by the classic Anglican appeal to history and to reason. Is this developed formulation, then, a reasonable understanding and manifestation of something for which there really is evidence from antiquity?[195]

Ramsey contrasted the liberal view of doctrinal development with the conservative or reactionary view, which saw doctrine as having been formed early, but revealed piecemeal over time. As an example, Ramsey cited the "kind of doctrinal development found among Roman Catholics [which] holds that the doctrine of Immaculate Conception always existed, but no one told us about it until 1854."[196] Liberals such as Gore took a much more flexible approach to doctrine in that social change inevitably influenced the development of doctrine.

The reactionary turn that Gore's career took during the first decade of the twentieth century fascinated Ramsey. He attributed this development in part to the certainty with which Gore approached historical questions about Christ's life and works. "To Bishop Gore," he wrote, "the historicity of Jesus and the apostolic age was very secure indeed. Theologians used the same critical methods that had been used with the Old Testament, but they were confident that in the gospels—despite certain elaborations

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[195] Ibid., 90.

[196] Ibid., 89.

and interpretations—we do have authentic history."[197] Gore had formed his ideas about the reality of biblical miracles by the time he became widely known as an Anglo-Catholic thinker in 1889. They did not evolve during subsequent decades, and within fifteen years of the publication of *Lux Mundi*, they had hardened into strict dogma, just as a more liberal generation of scholars arose to challenge Gore's historical interpretations. Ramsey wrote that for "several decades of Anglican life, this controversy tended to concentrate on miracles, particularly the miracle of the virgin birth of Jesus and the miracle of Jesus' bodily resurrection."[198] To Gore, "the historical evidence for these things was very sound. It was only a kind of negative, liberal protestant prejudice that would cause people to deny these miracles that are affirmed in the Creed."[199] Ramsey asserted that, because of Gore and his colleagues, the "Anglican appeal to history was made to carry a very great weight," but that in hindsight, "it could not handle all that weight."[200] Whereas the generation of scholars that followed *Lux Mundi* were comfortable leaving some or all such historical questions open to interpretation, Gore emphatically was not, and stances such as this contributed to his alienation from early twentieth-century theological liberals in the Church of England.

At the end of his chapter on Gore, Ramsey explained his own beliefs on the question of Christ's divinity in plain terms. "[A]s you would expect of an old man, I am pretty conservative about most things," he wrote. "But it is very important to understand

[197] Ibid., 90.

[198] Ibid., 91.

[199] Ibid.

[200] Ibid., 90-91.

these issues."[201] Ramsey readily affirmed his belief in Christ as "the divine Savior and God incarnate," and added that it would not be "the least surprising that miraculous things really happened."[202] He never addressed the inherent tension between his social and political liberalism, and his tolerant traditionalism on most matters of doctrine. However, he noted that it would also "not be the least surprising if the gospel narratives were of a symbolic, poetic kind witnessing a symbolic and poetic way to the Christian experience of a divine Savior."[203] He continued:

> I think that the Charles Gore kind of Liberal Catholicism did not reckon with this area of thought [the acceptance of miracles as symbolic rather than literal] as fully and fairly as it might have. Christianity is an historical faith, which believes that God manifests Himself through certain events and saves the world through certain events. *Drop that and you have made Christianity a different thing altogether.* But our knowledge of God must always consist of both an appeal to historical fact, of which there is plenty, and an appeal to experience—the experience of the first Christians and our experience as well.[204]

Ramsey's ability to balance the liberal and the traditional elements of his beliefs was one of the most valuable aspects of his scholarship in theology and history. It enabled him to evaluate trends in intellectual and religious history with relative dispassion. He wrote that "holding the appeal to history and to experience in balance is really the key both to the New Testament and to theology as a whole."[205] When Ramsey examined Gore's career, he tempered his extravagant praise for Gore's accomplishments with unsparing criticism of the reactionary character of his later writings and activism.

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[201] Ibid., 92.

[202] Ibid.

[203] Ibid.

[204] Ibid. Italics added.

[205] Ibid., 93.

When Ramsey turned to the life and writings of William Temple, he expressed his admiration for his predecessor at Canterbury in glowing terms. "We now come in the course of our lectures," he wrote, "to one of the greatest Anglicans in this or any other century, William Temple."[206] Temple had made massive contributions to Anglican theology in the first four decades of the twentieth century, and did so without the benefit of rigorous training in theology. His academic training had been in philosophy, and he was especially indebted to Plato and Hegel, but despite his meager formal background in theology, he was (in Ramsey's words) "perhaps as much as anyone who ever lived, a theologian."[207] Ramsey wrote that Temple, "interestingly enough, had the approach to theology of an amateur. He did not pursue biblical or patristic studies very rigorously, for his major intellectual interests lay outside the specific fields in which theologians for the most part worked."[208] Temple was, of course, passionately committed to Christian Socialism, and his concern for the economic distress of the working classes made him an iconic figure in the Church of England. Ramsey argued that Temple's activism reflected his "immense range of interests in the life of the community: educational and scientific, political and social."[209] He wrote that Temple sometimes confused other liberal Christians by insisting on the "priority of worship for the Christian life" rather than good works.[210] Temple believed that worship would influence conduct, because "there is no genuine worship of God that is not reflected in the urgent, practical, outgoing service of

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[206] Ibid., 95.

[207] Ibid.

[208] Ibid.

[209] Ibid., 96.

[210] Ibid.

humanity."[211] Ramsey found Temple's combination of liberal orthodoxy (with an emphasis on regular worship) and social activism extremely appealing. If anything, his admiration only increased after the radical theological experimentation of the 1960s.

Ramsey commended Temple's belief in social dialogue as well as his ability to persuade others to take his own position by respectfully dismantling their viewpoints. He wrote of Temple that, "when confronted with positions that were palpably erroneous and silly, his line was not to expose and denounce, but rather to say, 'Come here, let us look at it. This is what you believe.'"[212] Ramsey demonstrated a similar commitment to civil discourse throughout his career, and clearly looked to Temple as a model. Of Temple's talents of persuasion, he wrote: "This was and is a marvelous gift to have."[213] Just as Temple shared Maurice's belief in social dialogue, he also shared his commitment to the Incarnation as the basis for social theology. Temple, he wrote, believed "not just that human beings were spiritual, and that spirituality was diffused in the world, but that this spirituality had its illuminating focus and center in Jesus of Nazareth, believed in as God incarnate."[214] The importance of the Incarnation transcended doctrinal or religious boundaries, and encompassed all aspects of human existence. "Temple's quest," Ramsey wrote, "was a kind of Christian metaphysics embracing all knowledge and all human activity, with the Incarnation at the center."[215] To Temple, as to Maurice and Gore, the

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[211] Ibid.

[212] Ibid., 97.

[213] Ibid.

[214] Ibid., 98.

[215] Ibid.

Incarnation was the key to understanding God's love of humankind, despite our sinful and destructive nature.

If Temple located the Incarnation at the center of Christian religious life, he also stressed the importance of Christ's crucifixion, which he argued was "the key to our understanding of divine sovereignty."[216] If the Incarnation revealed God's character, then the crucifixion demonstrated his willingness to endure pain and death on behalf of those whom he had created in his own image. Ramsey wrote that Temple had a "deep conviction that the God who underwent the humiliation and suffering [of the crucifixion] is indeed the God who is glorious and sovereign."[217] Temple challenged theologians who believed that God was incapable of experiencing suffering. He argued that the suffering which Christ experienced on the cross did not indicate any passivity on God's part; rather, God consented to the suffering. "God suffers through identifying Himself and sharing and bearing all the sufferings of His creatures," Ramsey wrote in a summary of Temple's beliefs. "Yet He does not suffer as one who was defeated or frustrated, because God's suffering is part of that love which has already triumphed."[218] In Ramsey's formulation of divine suffering in the writings of Temple, the crucifixion of Christ may be understood as the culmination of the Incarnation, the completion of the process by which the divine became fully human: "God shows Himself to us in a person, and by knowing that person we know God."[219] There could be no more vivid demonstration of

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[216] Ibid., 99. The words quoted are Ramsey's.

[217] Ibid.

[218] Ibid.

[219] Ibid., 101.

the innate worthiness of humankind, or of the need for people to recognize the dignity of their fellow human beings.

When Ramsey explored the political aspect of Temple's career, he was unstinting in his praise. He commended Temple's willingness to take highly unpopular stances, even when that meant alienating the establishment or public opinion. "I wonder if there has ever been a Christian teacher," he wrote, "who witnessed so widely to his conviction about Jesus Christ in so many areas of the community. He spoke out against capitalism as it was developing, and argued that in principle a socialist state could be nearer to the mind of Christ than a capitalist state."[220] But, as Ramsey observed, it was not only on social and economic questions that Temple acted bravely. He strongly criticized the War Guilt Clause in the Treaty of Versailles, for example, as well as Allied bombing of civilian targets during the Second World War. Like Ramsey, Temple also opposed the death penalty. He based his opposition upon his belief in the sanctity of human life. Ramsey wrote that the "courageously prophetic" Temple "was among the first of the Christian leaders" to call for its abolition, "arguing that murder is the crime of treating human life as if it were not sacred. To punish the murderer by killing him is to take one further step in the devaluation of human life and is, therefore, immoral."[221] As Ramsey noted, Temple produced most of his theological writings in a period when the intellectual climate was significantly more sympathetic to theological and religious ideas than was the case after 1945. After Hitler and the Holocaust, Anglican theologians labored in what

[220] Ibid., 102.

[221] Ibid.

Ramsey called a "much grimmer" and "darker" world than that which had engaged Temple.

Ramsey concluded the chapter with a comparison of the careers of Gore and Temple. Clearly, these two monumental Anglican thinkers were linked in Ramsey's mind, much more than they had been in life. "They were very different," he wrote. "I remember how when I was a young man Charles Gore was beginning to be seen as too conservative. We looked for something a bit more liberal and contemporary, and found it in William Temple."[222] However, from the perspective of his retirement years in the late 1970s, Ramsey reconsidered his early preference for Temple:

> Looking back to Temple now, whose teaching used to inspire me very greatly, it seems rather dated. . . . But Charles Gore, who at the time seemed more old-fashioned and more remote, now seems to be more like the kind of timeless Hebrew prophet who in any age . . . can tell us about the righteousness of God. Yet both men were such giants, as Anglicans and theologians and Christians, who helped people to say to themselves, "If a man of that intellectual integrity can accept the Christian faith in God, well, I think I can accept it, too."[223]

Gore and Temple exemplified the values that Ramsey upheld in his historical writings—liberalism, social conscience, and a critical rather than fundamentalist approach to theological and moral questions. In *The Anglican Spirit*, Ramsey asserted that "all religious traditions have a cultural and political context."[224] This point is critical to any evaluation of Ramsey's place in the liberal Anglican tradition. To Ramsey, social theology was in a constant state of evolution, just as society itself evolved over time. He was not a radical by any means. He grounded his social liberalism in a deep belief in a

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[222] Ibid., 106.

[223] Ibid.

[224] Ibid., 35.

living God, in the reality of the Incarnation, and in the status of the Church as the body of Christ.

Ramsey saw no conflict between a faith based upon traditional (though not fundamentalist) doctrinal positions and what he believed to be inevitable social and cultural change. If this change enabled homosexuals and Commonwealth immigrants to live in peace and dignity in Britain, then according to Ramsey's social theology this change was a divinely intended process as well as another step towards the realization of a Christian society. He has so consistently been labeled an "Anglo-Catholic" that observers frequently did not notice the influence of the Christian Socialists on his theology. The historical context must be considered. By the time of Ramsey's accession to the episcopate in the early 1950s, the goals of Temple's generation of Christian Socialists had been more or less achieved under Prime Minister Clement Attlee's Labor government of 1945-1951. By the 1950s and the 1960s, the extreme poverty, social inequality, and economic uncertainty of the working classes that had so appalled Gore and Temple had been largely alleviated and had receded as pressing concerns in British politics. Racial and cultural disputes were becoming the primary manifestations of social tension in Britain during the 1960s, when the power of the Trade Union Congress was at its height. If economic issues were not prominent in the archbishop's activism while at Canterbury, the spirit of the Christian Socialists remained in his writings, speeches, and sermons on behalf of the least powerful and often most stigmatized members of British society.

6. Conclusion

This chapter has traced the development of Ramsey's religious life up to his promotion to Canterbury in 1961, and has explored his writings on the history of Anglican thought since the Reformation. He was attracted to the priesthood by the activist but theologically learned examples of Gore and Temple, who showed the budding young Liberal politician that one could make a career in the Church that combined a commitment to social justice with serious scholarship. Gore and Temple helped Ramsey to form a coherent idea of what constituted true Anglicanism. Ramsey was never hesitant to proclaim that certain thinkers or movements in Anglican theology had deviated from the classic *via media* as first defined by Richard Hooker. The strands of Anglicanism that stood the test of time were those which viewed the Church of England as an institution based upon moderation: orthodox yet confident enough to tolerate rigorous scholarly criticism. It was only several years after his ordination that Ramsey discovered the writings of Maurice, which influenced his social theology profoundly. Through his reading of Maurice, Ramsey developed a strongly Incarnational religious sensibility that was apparent in his theological and historical writings. The example of Maurice was instructive to Ramsey in its concern for the least powerful in society. Ramsey believed that Anglicanism was uniquely positioned to engage modernity, not only because of its tradition of intellectual freedom, but also because of the strong commitment to social justice. He had lived through the interwar period, with its crushing unemployment and working class despair. Only a Church which acknowledged and worked to address the rights of the poor and the powerless, and which recognized the complexity of modern

society rather than rejecting social change, could be a credible force for Christian values in the twentieth century.

CHAPTER III

THE SOCIAL THEOLOGY OF MICHAEL RAMSEY

1. Constructing a "New Christian Sociology"

During his years as Archbishop of York and then of Canterbury, Michael Ramsey grappled with social and political issues of a quite different nature from those which had confronted F. D. Maurice, Charles Gore, and William Temple, the Anglican theologians to whom Ramsey's social theology was most indebted. Maurice had written in the context of the 1830s and 1840s, a period of great social and political tumult, perhaps best symbolized by the Chartist Movement, which peaked just as Maurice was most committed to Christian Socialism. Gore had taken up the Christian Socialist mantle in the last quarter of the nineteenth century, when inequality and the economic insecurities of the working classes were pronounced. Finally, Temple's career and influence can only be understood within the context of the Slump and the two World Wars in which Britons made enormous sacrifices.

Ramsey, on the other hand, wrote during a period of economic expansion, rising living standards, and relatively high levels of disposable income even among the working classes. When Prime Minister Harold Macmillan campaigned in the General Election of 1959, he ran on the unofficial slogan "You've never had it so good." The results of that election confirmed that most of the British population agreed with him. Consequently, the great social and political issues that confronted the archbishop resulted not from economic inequality, but rather from heightened social tension over evolving moral attitudes and rapid demographic change. The series of legal reforms implemented by

Harold Wilson's Labor government between 1964 and 1970 included the decriminalization of homosexual acts, the liberalization of divorce laws, the suspension and subsequent abolition of the death penalty, and the legalization of abortion. Large swathes of the British public disapproved of the youthful spirit of revolt, suspicion of the establishment, and evolving social mores, whether sexual or religious. Large-scale immigration from the British Commonwealth also caused considerable anxiety among certain portions of the British public. These examples demonstrate how far removed the conflicts of the 1960s were from those of the first half of the twentieth century.

Ramsey stressed the importance of social theology even as an undergraduate at Cambridge, years before he considered taking Holy Orders in the Church of England. Although he had never identified himself as a Christian Socialist or joined the Christian Social Union, Ramsey derived most of his social theology from his reading of Gore, Temple, and later Maurice. Unlike his mother, who embraced the Labor Party after the collapse of the Liberals in the early 1920s, Ramsey remained a staunch Asquithian in his political views and nominally a Liberal, although he did not discuss partisan politics after his ordination. During the height of Temple's career, Ramsey was deeply committed to biblical theology, and his encounter with the writings of Maurice in the early 1930s reinforced his already strong sympathies with Christian Socialism. By the time he became Bishop of Durham in 1952, the Attlee government of 1946 to 1951 had implemented radical economic and social transformations that fulfilled most of the original goals of Christian Socialism. Austerity gave way to prosperity under the liberal Tory governments of Anthony Eden and Macmillan, who elevated Ramsey from York to Canterbury. Tory rhetoric about the welfare state emphasized effective management

rather than privatization. Socialism, or at least an acceptable version of it, appeared to have carried the day.

Ramsey's social theology affirmed the spirit of Christian Socialism without specifically identifying with it. This has made it difficult for scholars to locate Ramsey among his generation of Anglican theologians. The archbishop himself complained that he was misunderstood by his fellow bishops as well. In his unpublished reflections on his relationship with Geoffrey Fisher, his predecessor as Archbishop of Canterbury, Ramsey wrote:

> For my part I felt . . . that Fisher did not really understand the Anglo-Catholic outlook about faith, sacraments, and unity. That feeling made me to some extent the spokesman of the High Church view in discussions with him. In response he tended to regard me as rather a High Church partisan and as he read little and thought little about theological issues of a deeper kind he was unable to see that the Maurice type of Catholicism for which I stood was very different indeed from conventional High Church partisanship. I found this vexing.[225]

This was one of the most illuminating passages in his memoirs. Ramsey identified himself with Anglo-Catholicism, but pointedly qualified that association by describing his own religious views as a "Maurice type of Catholicism." The "conventional" sort of High Churchmanship from which he distanced himself was, in the 1950s and 1960s, frequently conservative, scholastic in temperament, and removed from the pressing issues of the age. (There were also socialist High Churchmen active in this period.) The aspect of Christian Socialism that was most important to Ramsey was the Incarnation, which he argued in *From Gore to Temple* was the defining theme in Anglican theology between 1889 and 1939, and which formed the basis of his own social theology. His scholarly research had helped him to forge a very personal theological identity in which the

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[225] Michael Ramsey, "Ramsey and Fisher" (1971), unpublished document in the Ramsey Papers, v. 322, 150-152, 151.

Incarnation, understood as a sanctifying event that had transformed human society into the "kingdom of Christ," was the defining feature.

In another passage from his memoir of Fisher, Ramsey demonstrated the importance of a coherent social theology in his own understanding of his duties as a bishop:

> I found it useless to try to discuss books with Fisher for he seemed not to read any and not to be interested. I found this depressing and freezing. I was anxious also to draw him out about big contemporary issues on which I was genuinely puzzled. At an early date I asked him for a discussion of the atomic bomb problem, but he brushed the issues aside very superficially and we got nowhere. I was anxious also to find my own role in my office, feeling sure that this must be dissimilar from and complementary to his. So at an early date I spoke to him about the theological needs of the time. He seemed to regard theology simply as an aspect of Church order and administration. He little realized that immense issues concerning faith itself were to burst upon the Church and the world within the next decade.[226]

Ramsey viewed his entire religious life, private and public, through the lens of theology. He believed that each age had its own "theological needs," and that it was the responsibility of the Church to engage the modern world on its own terms rather than to cling to dogma. Obviously, the theological needs of the Church in the Cold War era (evident in Ramsey's reference to the "atomic bomb problem") included contemplating newly developed technological evils that had never before confronted theologians. Ramsey believed that theologians must grapple with the complexities of modernity because theology was the most important of intellectual disciplines, and because the Church must be willing to advocate for Christian principles even as secularization was challenging its influence. Theology needed to be relevant to contemporary society if the Church were to fulfill its mission as Christ's institution.

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[226] Ibid.

Whereas the previous chapter was concerned with Ramsey's theological development and his writings on Anglican theological history, this chapter will analyze Ramsey's own works of social theology. Ramsey spent so much of his scholarly career reading and writing about other Anglican theologians that his own ideas about Church and society have been obscured. His social theology placed a strong emphasis on individual dignity and conscience, as well as on the importance of what is now called "tolerance," although this was not common parlance in mid-twentieth-century Britain and appeared only rarely in his writings. "Justice" was one of the words that appeared most frequently in Ramsey's works of social theology, and he supported political reforms that protected the rights of minorities (homosexuals, African and West Indian immigrants) in the face of sometimes intense public criticism. His writings articulated a vision of government as an impartial, humane entity, whose policies would ideally reflect liberal, democratic values.

2. Ramsey's Social Theology, 1936-1952

Ramsey published *The Gospel and the Catholic Church* in 1936. The book immediately established its author as a major new voice in Anglican theology, and his career in academic theology began a gradual but inexorable ascent that culminated in his appointment as Regius Professor of Divinity at Cambridge in 1950. The book ranges over diverse topics, including Church order and unity, liturgy, episcopacy, and the unique nature of Anglicanism. The most important social theological arguments appear in the chapter on the Body of Christ.

"It is indeed a paradox," Ramsey wrote, "that the death of Jesus, an event of utter isolation from men, should be the means of fellowship between men and God, and

between men and one another."[227] Through his death, Christ had demonstrated his willingness to experience human suffering in its totality. It was the ultimate expression of divine love for the human race, and it permanently embedded Christ into the hearts and spirits of those who followed his teachings and believed in his divinity. Ramsey wrote: "The death is—first of all—the deepest point of the Son of God's identification of Himself with men and of His entry into the stream of human life. . . . Remote from the superficialities of life and of society, the Christ enters by the way of the Cross into nearer and nearer contact with the grim human realities of sin and creatureliness and death."[228] The Incarnational aspects of Ramsey's reasoning are apparent, and the Maurician influence which Ramsey had acquired in the years immediately preceding the book's publication would be fully elaborated in the final chapter.

On the posthumous implications of Christ's death, Ramsey wrote that the disciples rooted their fellowship in their shared experiences of Christ. After his crucifixion, this fellowship extended to all subsequent Christians, who are joined to Christ through his death and resurrection. Ramsey carefully articulated the reasoning behind his argument: "The fellowship created at Pentecost grows far beyond the confines of Palestine and the Jewish race," he wrote, "and the Christians' understanding of its meaning and origin grows also."[229] In the following passage, he further explored how Christian fellowship evolved after the death of Christ:

> Wherever the fellowship spreads, those who share in it look back continually to the happenings in Jerusalem which brought them into their new life, and

[227] Ramsey, *The Gospel and the Catholic Church* (Cambridge, MA: Cowley Publications, 1990; originally published in 1936), 21.

[228] Ibid., 21-22.

[229] Ibid., 31.

> remember that the Spirit who sustains the fellowship is the gift of the Messiah who died and rose. But this is not all. For in every place where Christians are found they dare to assert that the Christ is in them, and that their relation to Him is not only the memory of a past event but *the fact of a present indwelling*.[230]

Through faith in the resurrected Christ and his indwelling spirit, Christians transcend their "self-centered nexus of appetites and impulses."[231] Properly understood, this entailed the negation of the self and a willing absorption with all of the faithful into the Body of Christ.

Ramsey wrote that "Christianity is . . . never solitary . . . for to believe in Christ is to believe in One whose Body [the Church] is a part of Himself and whose people are His own humanity."[232] He argued that the Christian faith, properly understood, constituted the complete negation of individualism, and that the collective nature of the faith was embodied in the Church, with its divinely ordered ministerial hierarchy and its liturgy. "From the Church therefore the Christian never escapes," he wrote, "it is a part of his own existence since it is a part of the Christ Himself. And without the Church the Christian does not grow, since the Christ is fulfilled in the totality of all His members."[233] Ramsey added that Christians must respond to the "sufferings of men" by seeking "to alleviate them, to heal them and to remove them, since they are hateful to God."[234] The Church and its members had to carry out Christ's work in his absence, and do so with a keen awareness of the reality of human suffering.

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[230] Ibid. Italics added.

[231] Ibid.

[232] Ibid., 36.

[233] Ibid., 38.

[234] Ibid., 41.

In 1945, Ramsey published his second book, *The Resurrection of Christ*. In the introduction, he wrote that his book would both analyze the Resurrection as a historical occurrence, and attempt to locate its significance for the modern world.[235] He devoted relatively few pages to the social implications of the Resurrection in what was otherwise a work of academic biblical theology. The seventh and eighth chapters contained the passages most relevant to Ramsey's social theology. In the former, Ramsey analyzed what he referred to as the "paradox" of the Church: "On the one hand it contains a divine life and is constituted by that divine life; on the other hand, its members are sinful and entangled in the world. . . . The Church was never otherwise."[236] He acknowledged the enormous difficulties inherent in any attempt to reconcile these two aspects of the Christian faith and its institution. "This paradox provides the historian of the Church with his biggest problems," he wrote, "and the good man who studies the contemporary Church in any age with his biggest perplexity."[237] However, he argued that Christians had to be careful when responding to the disparity between divine goodness and human depravity, because the responses of the Church in the modern age had often had unintended adverse consequences for the faith. He wrote:

> One attempted solution has been to regard the true Church as the society of the morally pure and perfect. 'Out with the weak and out with those who lapsed under persecution. Out with the harlots and the fornicators. Out with those who fail to reach a certain measurable standard of moral obedience!' This solution has been attempted by many Puritan movements both in early and later centuries. It does violence to the true meaning of the Church. For the holiness of the Church is the holiness of the Spirit whereby the members are made holy. To use visible standards of morality as a test of membership is to transfer the merit and glory

[235] Ramsey, *The Resurrection of Christ: A Study of the Event and Its Meaning for the Christian Faith* (London: Fontana, 1961; originally published in 1945), 6.

[236] Ibid., 97.

[237] Ibid., 98.

> from Christ to the members themselves, and to set for the Church as a society of the moral rather than a family of the redeemed. By this procedure fornication may be expelled, but pride and self-righteousness may eat their way within.[238]

Ramsey's argument here, as in his historical writings on the conflicts between Gore and Henson, depended on the existence of a divine Christ upon whom Christians depend for their own holiness.

To those who believed that the proper response to the Christian paradox was to place increased emphasis on the Church's institutional status in society, Ramsey asserted that this "solution has been attended by disastrous results."[239] The problem with this neo-Puseyite ecclesiology was that it "violates the distinction apparent in the New Testament between the Kingdom and the Church," he wrote. "For the Kingdom means primarily not the realm but the reign or sovereignty of God: and of this reign, which comes by the way of the Cross, the Church is the servant and the herald."[240] Having criticized overly institutional ideas about the Church, Ramsey proceeded to criticize those who denigrated the importance of the Church entirely. "This solution likewise contradicts the nature of New Testament Christianity," he claimed.[241] His argument hinged largely on what the Church illustrated about the Incarnation: "The Church belongs to history as well as to heaven, to flesh as well as spirit. It bears witness to the historical Incarnation of God."[242] He concluded that the paradox must be accepted; indeed, it was fundamental to the Christian experience. Those who attempted to distort the place of the Church in society,

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[238] Ibid.

[239] Ibid.

[240] Ibid., 98-99.

[241] Ibid., 99.

[242] Ibid.

or the place of the Church in the Christian faith, were creating a “false shortcut” and attempting a “denial of truth.”[243] Their labors were inevitably in vain, he wrote, for the “New Testament will not ease the paradox for us”; on the contrary, “the New Testament suggests that the way is to accept the paradox, not with complaisance nor with a sense of grievance but with the light of the Cross and the Resurrection upon it.”[244] This was a very Anglican approach to what Ramsey portrayed as a serious burden for Christians. Just as Anglicans such as Hooker had portrayed the Church of England as the *via media*, a combination of ancient catholicism and reformed Protestant Christianity that flourished despite its apparent tensions, so did Ramsey portray the ideal Christian response to be the acceptance of the tension between the divine and the temporal.

In 1949, Ramsey published his third work of biblical theology, *The Glory of God and the Transfiguration of Christ*. Its contribution to his social theology was negligible.

3. Christians in Society:

Durham, 1952-1956

Ramsey entered the ranks of the episcopate in 1952, when he was appointed to the see of Durham, one of the most senior positions in the Anglican hierarchy. This was the happiest period of all his years as a bishop and archbishop. In the introduction to his collection of *Durham Essays and Addresses*, Ramsey wrote that “the modern traditions of the Bishopric were built by Lightfoot and Westcott, who combined the spirit of its past

[243] Ibid.

[244] Ibid.

with a rare power of appeal to the community in their time."[245] He was acutely aware of the hardships which the diocese had endured during the Slump:

> In the present century the appalling industrial depression between the two wars evoked a solidarity of brotherhood, courage, and endurance in the community and gave it also a heightened political self-consciousness. That political self-consciousness, which has its drawbacks and its dangers, is something without which the Durham of to-day cannot be understood. With it is the underlying anxiety to avoid anything like a repetition of the horrors of the 1930s.[246]

For Ramsey, this awareness was congruous with the Durham tradition of scholarship and a commitment to social justice. These characteristics were evident to varying degrees in many of the most distinguished occupants of the see since the early years of Victoria's reign: Lightfoot, Westcott, Henson, Ramsey, and later John Habgood, David Jenkins, and N. T. Wright. None of these eminent figures was more conscious of the Durham tradition than Ramsey.

The essay "Faith and Society" was Ramsey's most significant contribution to Christian social thought in the first half of his clerical career. In it he offered a tentative overview of the state of "Christian sociology" in Britain during the first half of the 1950s, as well a distillation of his own social thought at this transitional time in his career. For over a decade, Ramsey had played the isolated role of the academic priest, teaching theology at Durham University, serving as a canon at Durham Cathedral, and conducting scholarly work in both theology and history. Issues of a social or political nature were not in the forefront of his activities during this period. However, as he demonstrated in "Faith and Society," the years of toil in the vineyards of biblical theology had not dulled the onetime Liberal activist's interest in questions of social justice.

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[245] Ramsey, "Preface," in *Durham Essays and Addresses* (SPCK: 1956), 10.

[246] Ibid.

From his newly elevated perspective at Auckland Castle, Ramsey surveyed the landscape of social thought in modern Anglicanism, less than a decade after the death of its most radical and revered exponent, William Temple. Temple had brought to culmination a socialist tradition that had originated in the middle of the nineteenth century. His shadow loomed large over any consideration of Anglican social theology in the 1950s. In his history of the post-war Church, Paul Welsby wrote that Temple had "persuaded many Christians that faith demanded a concern with the affairs of the world," but in the aftermath of his sudden death, many of his ideas faded in significance.[247] Some Anglican leaders suggested replacing Temple with another activist social reformer. Lord Halifax, a powerful Anglican layman, suggested Bishop George Bell of Chichester to Prime Minister Churchill as Temple's successor, but Churchill, who bitterly resented Bell's criticisms of Allied bombing of civilian areas during the war, responded with incredulity. The Scottish Episcopalian theologian and philosopher Donald MacKinnon described the selection of Fisher over Bell as a "misfortune" for the post-war Church—a sentiment with which many liberal Anglicans agreed.[248] Fisher, an energetic middle-of-the-road Anglican Protestant who was thoroughly conservative (though not reactionary) in his social and political inclinations, set the tone for the Church of England in the late 1940s and throughout the 1950s.

Ramsey wrote "Faith and Society" in the midst of the Fisher years, during which post-war austerity gave way to economic expansion, and a moderate form of Toryism, embodied by upper-middle-class figures such as Harold Macmillan and R. A. Butler

[247] Paul A. Welsby, *A History of the Church of England, 1945-1980* (London: Oxford University Press, 1984), 5.

[248] Ibid., 9.

(both devout Anglicans), dominated British politics.[249] A majority of the episcopate endorsed the social transformations wrought by Attlee's government, including the creation of the National Health Service (NHS), which provided virtually universal medical coverage to the British people for free. Figures such as Archbishop Garbett of York and Bishop J. W. C. Wand of London spoke enthusiastically about socialized medicine in Britain. Garbett stated, "Christians should welcome the Welfare State. It is the embodiment of the principle 'Bear ye one another's burdens and so fulfill the law of Christ.'"[250] The Church itself played an important role in the NHS from its earliest days. It assigned to every NHS hospital an Anglican chaplain whose salary was paid by the British government rather than by the Church. Like the British middle classes from whose ranks its own membership was mostly drawn, the Anglican episcopate had witnessed the tribulations of the Slump and the horrors of two World Wars. Most of them saw the welfare state as a just reward to the working classes and an emblem of Britain's modern, liberal society.

The role of the Church in this new society was a crucial issue to Ramsey, who began his essay by criticizing the lack of serious Anglican thought on social questions. Given the social transformations of the time, he wrote, one could reasonably wonder "whether there is a sound theological basis for the work of the Christian sociologist."[251] In the first half of his essay, he listed some of the enormous issues that confronted social theology in the middle of the twentieth century. The great age of Anglican social

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[249] There is no date attached to the essay in Ramsey's *Durham Essays and Addresses*.

[250] Ibid., 15.

[251] Ramsey, "Faith and Society," in *Durham Essays and Addresses*, 41.

activism appeared to be over. In one important passage, Ramsey considered the role of the post-World War II welfare state in the decline of social theology:

> The Welfare State has appeared to cut the ground from beneath the feet of the Christian sociologist. In the days of gross injustices in wages, and of neglect of provision for the workers' health and security and housing, Churchmen were concerned with a Christianized politics and economics *as a corollary of the Incarnation.* Now that the State does so much to make the people well-paid, well-housed, healthy, and secure, it has become the role of the Christian teacher not to say, 'Let us have a Christian politics,' but rather to try to bring home to the people that politics is not everything and that they should think about eternal life, the worth of the soul, and the worship of God for his own sake. Let the Church keep alive the transcendental concerns which the Welfare State tends to crowd out of the minds of the people.[252]

In this single paragraph, Ramsey outlined the principal elements of his critique of contemporary social theology. The complacent presence of Archbishop Fisher had replaced the activist spirit of Gore and Temple. Fisher had devoted enormous time and attention to the revision of Anglican canon law, but he did nothing of import for Anglican theology, a process which Ramsey considered critical to keep the Church relevant to contemporary concerns in the second half of the twentieth century. Ramsey also denigrated religion that withdrew from modern society and social theology. He expressed his distaste for insular religion repeatedly in his writings.

Ramsey argued that the "disturbing fact is that in recent years the preaching of the Gospel has gone awry."[253] A form of complacency had taken hold in theology, characterized by what Ramsey called "'if only' preaching'": "'if only' you would repent and turn to God, then peace and security for mankind would be round the corner."[254] He

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[252] Ibid. Italics added.

[253] Ibid., 42.

[254] Ibid.

wrote that “there might still be possibilities for sociology [social theology] if the gospel which we preached retained its integrity as the sovereign will of God demanding and enabling the response of man *in the totality of his being*.”[255] The Gospel had been reduced to wishful thinking, and a new emphasis on private worship as an end in itself meant that there was not “much mention of the sort of *society* which reflects God’s glory.”[256] The work of the Church required it to assume an active role in society and guide society towards Christian values. For Ramsey, this did not mean simple moral condemnation. His fundamental criticism of “if only” theology was that it removed the Church and its adherents from responsibility for the state of society; it entailed acceptance of, and thus acquiescence in, injustice and inequality.

Ramsey expressed contempt for those conservatives who would reduce Christian morality to the governing of private behavior. He wrote that “fundamentalist evangelism helps to destroy the ground of a Christian sociology . . . [and cuts] at the root of a rational faith,” and that “there is need for a radical critique of an evangel which dishonors man by appealing to less than the whole of him as a creature made in the image of God.”[257] The anti-intellectual streak that characterized conservative Christianity diminished both the Gospel and humankind. The Incarnational strain in Ramsey’s thought is apparent here. However, he qualified his endorsement of “the tradition of Maurice, Westcott, Holland, and Gore” by arguing that the Incarnational theology of “the period from 1890 until almost 1940 was framed in the idiom of an evolutionary and progressive world which no

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[255] Ibid.

[256] Ibid.

[257] Ibid., 43.

longer exists, and its idiom no longer suffices."[258] That world had ended with the Second World War. Ramsey did not wish to abandon Incarnational theology; rather, he wanted to adapt it to a society that was considerably different from that of his predecessors. Theologians had to comprehend and engage the new problems of post-war Britain.

Ramsey offered "some introductory hints" about how he thought the Church could revive social theology. His first hint would prove to be a remarkably prescient foreshadowing of the debates of the 1960s:

> God created the world. His Logos penetrates it. His light illuminates men's minds and consciences and leads them . . . to live not as savages, but in societies, bound by ethical sanctions . . . Society or civilization has features everywhere common, even in a world as split by ideologies as is the world to-day. It is not devoid of perceptions of what is right for individual, family, community, and State, nor of certain capacities to do what is right and to expect right to be done. The State, stricken as it is by sin and operated by sinful men, is set to be a check against the ravages of sin by upholding order and justice. It is therefore possible for a Christian to talk to a non-Christian man . . . about what ought to be done in the social order—not as lecturing as if to say, "If only you were Christians you would grasp," but as saying, on the same level of the hearer, "This is what is just for us men in the nature of things to do."[259]

Ramsey wrote these words while Bishop of Durham, years before the issues of immigration and multiculturalism burst into the consciousness of the British public. They articulated the ideas that motivated Ramsey's activism not only on behalf of immigrants, but of homosexuals as well. Ramsey asserted that people's ability to discern right from wrong resulted from their creation in God's image. Thus all human beings were endowed with an awareness of the need for justice, but in a modern democratic society the state, enlightened by general revelation, helped to define justice while implementing laws that reflected it. The state and its laws, if constructed out of our

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[258] Ibid.

[259] Ibid., 44-45.

innate knowledge of what was right, should serve as a buffer against savagery. In Ramsey's theology, humankind was not condemned to remain mired in sin (which he equated to injustice), but was, on the contrary, able to overcome it through God's grace. This created human ability, as Ramsey described it, was not dependent on political ideology or even religion. However, overcoming sin was a continuously difficult undertaking, and the Church should remain a steadfast fount of Christian values and guidance even in the secular environment of the later twentieth century.[260] Reactionaries were wrong to condemn modernity for its amorality and to convince themselves that the Church had no option other than to recede into itself as the refuge of the faithful against society. By influencing the public and the state, the Church and its values would remain relevant.

In his second "modification" of contemporary social theology, Ramsey wrote that the world had been "redeemed," and added that "it is not only the Church which is redeemed."[261] He stressed that "[w]e need to be concrete and empirical" when we describe the world as "redeemed": "Society since Christ, both when unconverted as well as when converted, is affected by the presence within the universe of the risen Christ and his Church in paradise and on earth. It is subject to inroads of Christian influence."[262] Ramsey again did not differentiate between Christian and non-Christian in his analysis of faith and society. The Incarnation had transformed and sanctified all human societies. As his later behavior proved, Ramsey opposed to any kind of social divisions predicated

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[260] Ibid., 45.

[261] Ibid.

[262] Ibid.

on race, class, or religion. He believed that the Church had an obligation to exhort the British people and their government to affirm civil rights, humane forms of punishment, and even a foreign policy that would exclude racist regimes from equal standing in the international community. Because the Church no longer exercised the sort of political power that it had held in the late ancient or medieval periods, the best way to contribute to a Christian society was by urging the state to implement policies that reflected the moral teachings of Christ. Ramsey was proposing a theology that sought to realize its goals through the Church's institutional influence with the state, which should enact laws affirming the principles of impartial justice and equality.

Contrary to the claims of many of his less informed critics during the 1960s, Ramsey's Incarnational ideas about society did not keep him from recognizing sin and evil as an inevitable part of the human condition. He wrote that Christians' "possession of the new glorious status does not lead them to think themselves 'above' the old status, of a child of Adam. Far from it."[263] Ramsey's supposedly "permissive" stances on diverse social and political issues during his years at Canterbury emerged not from a lack of concern over morality, but rather from his belief that the sanctification of humankind was more powerful than the impulse to sin. "Being now the heirs of a supernatural sanctity they [Christians] are the more able to . . . ally themselves to whatsoever is good, true, lovely, of good report—if there be any virtue, if there be any praise—amongst their fellows," he wrote. Here humankind reflected the transformed reality in which it exists: "That is how the Christians are the salt of the earth: they season civilization to be its best

[263] Ibid., 46.

in terms of justice, order, and decency."[264] This last sentence can be seen as Ramsey's vision of Christian relevance in a secularizing society.

Ramsey described the social activity of the Church in terms borrowed directly from Gore, whose famous essay on the doctrine of kenosis had been one of the most controversial chapters of *Lux Mundi*. "There is . . . a kind of *kenosis* or self-emptying in the Christians' witness and influences in society," Ramsey wrote. "They span both worlds [temporal and divine], and their possession of the new world should enhance their power to talk to the old world—not as from a pedestal of the converted but as from alongside."[265] Much High Church social thought, especially that influenced by the Oxford Movement, emphasized the status and legitimacy of the Church of England at the expense of other Protestant denominations, whose inability to claim apostolic succession reduced them to mere sects rather than actual churches. Ramsey rejected this exclusivity in his social theology. He further extrapolated his ideas about Christian "witness" with what he called "a practical illustration":

> Suppose a Trade Union is bullying a man . . . because he refuses to toe the line with the party. A Christian in the Trade Union protests. What is the nature of his protest, and how can it be effective? He will not say, 'You heathen fellows know nothing of justice and liberty; we converts know better, and have justice and liberty in our converted society.' No, that is the kind of hot-gospelling which disallows the moral validity of the natural order. No, the Christian protests against the bullying of a Trade Union in the name of justice and liberty which lie at the root of human association as made by God, and at the root of Trade Unionism itself.[266]

[264] Ibid.

[265] Ibid.

[266] Ibid.

Ramsey disavowed the smugness of the moral scold. Instead, he exhorted his fellow Christians to conduct themselves in society with "courage and humility with a power to prick the heart—these come indeed from a supernatural source, from a life hid with Christ in God."[267] In a society in which Christianity's influence had diminished sharply, Christians were much more likely to make inroads through kindness and compassion than through moral admonishment.

By emphasizing the common moral principles which he believed guided Christianity and human society, Ramsey argued against the concept of what he called "the Church over against Society." This concept, which he attributed to "fundamentalist hot-gospellers" as well as to some fervent Anglo-Catholics, often involved passivity toward social problems, born from a belief in humankind's overwhelming tendency toward sinfulness. Ramsey proposed positive engagement. By living Christian values daily and demanding them from our political and social institutions (although not demanding that those institutions be specifically Christian), Christians could regain the "power to speak about what society ought to be like and ought to do in respect of this or that."[268] For Ramsey, Christians would have to act with integrity and respect for others' views if they genuinely hoped to be catalysts for social justice.

4. The Social Responsibility of the Church: York and Canterbury, 1956-1974

In 1964, only three years into his tenure at Canterbury, Ramsey published a collection of his speeches and articles entitled *Canterbury Essays and Addresses*. In spite

[267] Ibid.

[268] Ibid., 48.

of the title, roughly half of the volume consisted of writings from his five years at York. Ramsey explored many topics in the book, including theology, politics, British society and culture, and biographical analyses of prominent Anglican figures of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. One notable difference between this collection and its predecessor, *Durham Essays and Addresses*, was its author's increased preoccupation with current affairs, and with how Christians should respond to the rapid changes which they encountered at the beginning of the 1960s.

Two of the most important essays are "The Priest" and "The Bishop," written in 1958 and 1962, respectively. The first was an address that Ramsey delivered at Cuddesdon, the Anglo-Catholic seminary where he studied and taught in the 1920s. He paid tribute to Cuddesdon, which had been founded in 1854 by the High Church Bishop of Oxford, Samuel Wilberforce (1805-1873). "It was here that we faced the truth about ourselves before the Cross of Christ," he wrote, "and with the painful shattering of our pride discovered that we have no sufficiency of ourselves to think anything of ourselves."[269] He pivoted from the topic of priestly humility (a frequent theme in his writings) to the enormity of the changes that priests of his generation had encountered since their ordinations:

> In my day—a generation now just a little elderly, though not yet senile—I doubt if any of us would have guessed that there would be a second world war within just over a decade, or that the Communist Russia was destined to become so dark a menace to the world. . . . Nor could we have guessed the extent to which industrial development was going to bring about the technological kind of outlook . . ., nor that the Welfare State would really come to be, and when it came, would produce the mentality of comfort in the way it has. And who would have guessed that the epoch of social security within the State would also be the epoch of "near-

[269] Ramsey, "The Priest," in *Canterbury Essays and Addresses* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1964, 156-160), 156.

> catastrophe" in the world as a whole through the creation of weapons able to annihilate the world itself?[270]

Priests of Ramsey's generation had also confronted the steady secularization of British society, a dramatic change from the interwar period. The archbishop was particularly struck by the fundamental indifference that many Britons felt towards religious questions. He wrote that a "mental outlook is created in the people of the country by TV, radio, newspapers, novels, and the rest—a mental background in which life and death, birth and marriage, home and work are discussed and argued about with the assumption that God and religion have no place whatever on the map. It is to penetrate this world of assumptions so far removed from the Christian faith that is our baffling task."[271] This was a radically different social and cultural environment for Anglican priests, and presented unique challenges to those who chose to take Holy Orders in the Church of England after 1945.

Ramsey acknowledged the efforts of those in the Church who had recognized and responded to the need for new forms of priestly training. In his words, they had persuasively argued "that we must not try to fight a modern war with horse transport and with bows and arrows."[272] In an effort to contribute to the Anglican clergy's pastoral efficacy, Ramsey offered his own ideas about how to address "some needs which seem to me to be very urgent."[273] He wrote that, in "both the parishes and the industries of the land," groups of laity should be selected and trained by clergy to begin "meeting,

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[270] Ibid., 157.

[271] Ibid., 158.

[272] Ibid.

[273] Ibid.

studying, praying, looking for the will of God for themselves in the setting of their daily occupations, and drawing their neighbors into their fellowship."[274] Rather than formulate an ambitious plan to re-Christianize Britain, Ramsey located the real opportunity for Christian renewal in the daily lives of Britons.

On theological matters, Ramsey wrote that the Church needed "to break away from the notion, which still clings, that theology and the humanities are together the one mental discipline for a Christian, and that science is necessarily another world."[275] The days when the Church needed to be afraid of scientific discovery had passed in the nineteenth century, when Christians had frequently damaged their credibility by responding to science with fear. In the middle of the twentieth century, Ramsey asserted that "[w]e need theologians, if God will give them to us, who will think and write of God and man from the midst of those very mental disciplines which a scientific age is creating."[276] However, he urged his listeners to avoid the temptation of novelty for novelty's sake. One's mind should always be open to the example of Christ, whose apostles labored in a world devoid of scientific insight. When they "were grappling with the worst manifestation of evil they had yet confronted . . ., they longed no doubt for new techniques."[277] Christ urged his apostles to turn to fasting and prayer when confronted by recalcitrant forms of evil. To Ramsey, this was the solution for the modern clergy as well. "Amid methods old and methods new, alike amid bows and arrows and the weapons of modern war," he wrote, "the art and science of Christ and the apostles

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[274] Ibid.

[275] Ibid., 159.

[276] Ibid.

[277] Ibid.

remains to learn and to practice, never to be taken as granted, always to be painfully learnt."[278] Ramsey argued that the model of Christ demonstrated the importance of spiritual "withdrawal" in the lives of priests.

In "The Bishop," Ramsey explored some of the same themes that he had referenced in "The Priest," but this time with an eye towards how the episcopate functioned and why it was necessary. He delivered the speech at the enthronement of the new Bishop of Washington, DC, in November of 1962. "The bishop is the shepherd, the teacher, the intercessor amidst the flock of Christ," he wrote. "He has before him the pattern of our Lord himself."[279] Ramsey delivered his speech on All Saints Day, which compelled him to analyze what it meant to be a Christian saint. He asserted that the primary quality of saintliness was humility, which "marks him [the saint] and enables him to convey to others the sense of God's nearness."[280] The recognition of human suffering was another prerequisite for Christian saintliness—a recognition borne of the saint's willingness to recognize the dignity and worth of his fellow human beings. He wrote:

> The world around us is apathetic, for while people in general admire goodness they feel awkward with words like saint or saintliness. Yet it is saintliness that is able to pierce the worldly heart or mind. It too is the authentic proof of the supernatural claim of our Christian faith, and it keeps the Church on earth directed towards its heavenly goal: "His servants shall serve him and they shall see his face."[281]

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[278] Ibid.

[279] Ramsey, "The Bishop," in *Canterbury Essays and Addresses* (New York: The Seabury Press, 1964), 162-163.

[280] Ibid., 161.

[281] Ibid.

The apathetic society of the 1960s posed unique challenges to the Anglican clergy. The explosion of new forms of mass media and popular culture made the public less interested in the proclamations of establishment institutions such as the Church. "The Church must indeed be deeply involved with the present age, studying it, learning its techniques, sensitive to its aspirations and fears," he wrote, "and yet as a Church we shall grapple with the present age best if there is in our Church life the otherworldly strain of which All Saints Day is the reminder."[282] Priests and bishops had to learn to navigate their way through the challenges of modernity while maintaining an otherworldliness rooted in a close personal relationship with Christ.

Ramsey analyzed the role of the bishop in the early 1960s. A bishop must be "aware of the urgent issues of the day," he wrote.[283] In an inventory of these urgent issues, Ramsey placed race at the top of the list. "Here the Church stands without compromise against every form of apartheid," he wrote. "[R]aces must be seen worshipping side by side, for to exclude a man of another race from the house of God is to exclude Christ."[284] Peace was the next issue, and Ramsey urged Christians to "throw the weight of their prayer and influence for the will of nations to agree to disarm and so give peace a chance."[285] Economic inequality was Ramsey's third issue. "There is the problem of affluence," he wrote. "It is time that we in England and America paid heed to our Lord's warning against riches, and to the first beatitude, 'Blessed are the poor in spirit.' Ought not the life of Christians to be marked by a greater indifference to luxury

[282] Ibid., 162.

[283] Ibid., 163.

[284] Ibid.

[285] Ibid.

and comfort."[286] The spiritual and moral dangers of wealth and self-indulgence were regular themes in Ramsey's speeches at Canterbury.

In 1962, Ramsey delivered a lecture entitled "Christian Responsibility in a World Society" at a conference in London.[287] He exhorted Christians to resist passivity in the face of injustice, and instead to remain conscious of his or her obligations as a follower of Christ. Ramsey opened his lecture by asserting the interconnectedness of the Christian hope of divine harmony in eternity and Christian responsibility in temporal society:

> On the one hand, we cannot conceive the coming of God's kingdom in the world apart from the consummation in heaven. On the other hand as we look towards the vision of God in heaven, we know that just because heaven is the perfection of love we do not advance one step towards heaven unless the same love is showing itself in our service of the human race here and now and in our healing of its wounds and divisions.[288]

He argued that this "double aspect of the Christian code determines our attitude towards the state, the nation, and the individual man and woman."[289] His discussion of state, nation (a term he used to denote society), and individuals included a description of what he called the "God-given role" that each of these elements of society would ideally assume. The primary functions of the state were "order, justice, and the well-being of a nation," but the state should recognize that "its citizens are creatures in God's image with our eternal destiny," and it can only understand "its duty to them if it knows that they have a heavenly goal bound up with absolutes of right and wrong."[290] The state must

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[286] Ibid.

[287] The conference was held by the Wyndham Place Trust on 15 November 1962.

[288] Ramsey, "Christian Responsibility in a World Society," in *Canterbury Essays and Addresses*, 83-86, 83.

[289] Ibid.

[290] Ibid.

execute its functions with an awareness of the God-given dignity of its citizens, and the affirmation of this dignity should be the guiding principle of the state.

Ramsey defined the role of the nation (or society) as "the fulfillment of its own corporate life, physical and spiritual," and the "service [to] other nations," for "the scene of Christ washing the feet of the disciples is to be imitated not only by individuals but by communities and nations in their service of one another."[291] Finally, the role of the individual in society was to pursue "self-fulfillment" and "service."[292] Ramsey stressed the importance of service in society, which he argued must always accompany "self-fulfillment." The Christian principles of humility and tolerance were of paramount significance to his social theology, in part because he was frequently disturbed by the anger and divisiveness that characterized much reactionary Christian rhetoric. In an age when the Church's status and moral legitimacy were seriously diminished, Ramsey believed that its best hope of remaining relevant was by appealing to virtues that transcended religious sectarianism and appealed instead to the innate moral sense of the public. As we have seen earlier in the discussion of his essay "Faith and Society," Ramsey believed that there a sense of right and wrong was a universal human trait, regardless of one's religious beliefs (or even lack thereof).

In his exegesis of Christian responsibility in the international community, Ramsey wrote that

> the Christian will, as the outcome of the doctrines which I have been describing, want his country to be the servant and the helper of other countries. He will be concerned to see his country doing all it can for the help of the impoverished peoples, especially those where hunger is acute. He will want to emphasize that if

[291] Ibid., 83-84.

[292] Ibid., 84.

> his country enters a group of nations . . . for their mutual benefit there must be the utmost concern at the same time for the help of the underdeveloped and poor countries.[293]

The primary concern of the hypothetical Christian whom the archbishop described would not be the pursuit of an aggressive foreign policy, but rather the aiding of nations and the relief of human suffering. The evil of human suffering was one of Ramsey's consistent themes in his writings on Christianity and society. He recognized that suffering was unavoidable, but his response was only to call for its alleviation all the more urgently. Suffering could take many different forms, but it was the responsibility of Christians and the Church to advocate for policies that eliminated suffering as much as possible in a world which Ramsey recognized as imperfect. For him, the elimination of laws that persecuted homosexuals, or the pursuit of a foreign policy that ostracized racist regimes, were as much a contribution as the feeding of starving people in the eradication of unnecessary human suffering.

Ramsey cautioned Christians to "watch carefully the concept of freedom and the claims made for it."[294] Characteristically, the author resisted the self-congratulatory sentiments that were at times apparent in Western attitudes during the Cold War. He wrote that the "freedom with which Christians are concerned is achieved not just by democratic institutions, but by democratic institutions disciplined by the highest ideals."[295] Christianity demanded that the faithful be motivated by altruism, "a giving which will include both things material and things spiritual," and Ramsey singled out

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[293] Ibid.

[294] Ibid.

[295] Ibid.

Africa and Asia as regions which were particularly in need of aid from the West.[296] He warned against despair "amid the violence of the world and the intractability of human affairs" and concluded:

> What can we do? Does anything that we do really signify? We answer, from the one side of the Christian hope, that every single act of charity or justice has its part in that training of souls for eternity which is the Creator's first and final purpose for human beings. We answer also, from the other side of the Christian hope, that every single act of charity or justice witnesses to the supreme worth of the individual man and woman in this world and serves, even though we may not quite see how, the victory of our creator's purpose here on earth.[297]

The subtleties of Ramsey's Incarnational thinking were apparent here. He asserted the "supreme worth" of each human being, and linked acts of "charity and justice" to the unfolding of God's divine plan for humankind. Even seemingly insignificant acts contributed to the process.

On 4 December 1962, Ramsey delivered a lecture on "The Crisis of Human Freedom."[298] "I want to speak about some of the difficulties with which Tolerance and Freedom have been beset," he wrote, "and about the critical condition of both of them today."[299] In an illuminating anecdote, he recounted how as a schoolboy he had been assigned to write an essay in response to the question, "Would you have been a Cavalier or a Roundhead and why?" Ramsey wrote that his response was, "I would have been a Roundhead because the Roundheads were more tolerant than the Cavaliers."[300] Even as a

[296] Ibid.

[297] Ibid., 86.

[298] There is no information on where Ramsey delivered the lecture in *Canterbury Essays and Addresses*.
[299] Ramsey, "The Crisis of Human Freedom," in *Canterbury Essays and Addresses*, 11-19, 11.

[300] Ibid.

child, Ramsey had "picked tolerance as the criterion for his approval."[301] He expounded on the meaning of tolerance (or "toleration") and carefully differentiated it from indifference:

> Toleration means that a man who holds opinions does not want to impose them on others by any external pressure or enforce them by any means save persuasion; and similarly a state will not coerce or punish people for holding particular opinions, and a religion will not propagate its beliefs except by winning minds and consciences to accept it. The definition applies only if a man holds opinions. If a man holds no opinions or convictions, he is not being tolerant if he acquiesces in other people's; he is being indifferent. This needs to be emphasized. Indifference is not toleration; indifference is no virtue, the indifferent man exercises no self-restraint, no humility when he says he does not mind the opinions of others.[302]

He argued that indifference to moral, social, or cultural issues was a form of "laziness," in contrast to those who hold convictions, sometimes passionately, but who recognize the importance of mutually respectful discourse in discussing issues. "True tolerance implies convictions," he wrote. "The tolerant man, however, reverences the processes by which he reached his own convictions—the process of reason, argument, intuition, conscience—and he therefore reverences the same processes at work in another man which lead that man to his own convictions."[303] Genuine tolerance required one to recognize the good faith and rationality of those whose opinions differ from one's own, even when this recognition was difficult.

Delving deeper into the "meaning" of tolerance, Ramsey pondered why it should be one of the most important values in a free society. In his analysis of tolerance, he betrayed his Maurician sympathies when he wrote: "Its deeper meaning is reverence for

[301] Ibid.

[302] Ibid., 12.

[303] Ibid.

the other man because you believe something about him and about yourself."[304] He asserted that tolerance "rests upon divine sanctions," and bolstered his argument with a reference to the Gospels.[305] "It is recorded that two of Christ's apostles wanted to ask for fire from heaven to destroy a Samaritan village which refused to receive their message," he wrote, "and Christ rebuked them. Too often Christians, and Churches, have followed the bad example of the two apostles and not the rebuke of Christ."[306] Tolerance reflected what Ramsey called "the truth about Man in the divine image," and he examined an aspect of modern society that he believed "sorely tried" the survival of tolerance as a social value: racism.[307] He argued that it was racism "which most of all calls us to go beyond tolerance and to see the insufficiency of tolerance as a conception."[308] He explained why tolerance was often insufficient as a remedy for racism:

> I need tolerance if I am to allow a man to have a different theology or different politics from my own. But if I am to allow a black man to live in my community it is not a matter of allowing his opinions but of allowing him; and while between my opinions and his opinions there can be an apathetic co-existence (which negatively is all that tolerance means), there cannot be merely that between one man and another man so long as the word man means what we believe it to mean. The alternative to racism is not tolerance; it is those deeper virtues in our Jewish-Christian tradition in which tolerance must merge itself if the thing and the word are to survive.

Having affirmed tolerance, but also having recognized its limitations as a basis for social harmony, Ramsey turned to the idea of "freedom," a theoretical state that made tolerance necessary in the first place. "This has often been spoken about as if it were very simple,"

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[304] Ibid., 13.

[305] Ibid., 14.

[306] Ibid.

[307] Ibid.

[308] Ibid., 15.

he wrote, referring to freedom, “but it has more complexities even than tolerance.”[309] Ramsey asserted that those who believed that political freedom would solve all of society’s problems were misguided because they assumed that humankind is rational and able to overcome sin, if given the right environment in which to do so.

“It is easy for us now to smile at the naivete of the various phases of modern cult of freedom,” he wrote. “But we are not always ready to see and to state clearly the moral: that the root error was to regard man as competent in his own powers to forge progress for himself, and to forget that man is a creature and a sinner able to turn to corruption every advance that he makes.”[310] Politics itself was inadequate to the task of giving fulfillment to the human race: “Democracy is necessary to man’s right fulfillment of himself, but it serves the true ends of its citizens only if it is animated by a sense of moral law and a sense of eternal worth of the individual man which reach far beyond itself.”[311] Just as he expressed skepticism towards theologians who reduced Christ to a purely human ethical teacher, so did he express skepticism towards those who believed in a natural progression of freedom without any influence from Church.

In an attempt to answer the question, “What is man’s true freedom?”, Ramsey rejected the idea that freedom consisted simply of “the right of an individual to think, believe, teach, and do what he pleases so long as he does not injure his fellows in ways in which the State must prevent or punish.”[312] He argued that there had been a “breakdown in the secular quest for freedom in the modern world,” and that true freedom lay not in

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[309] Ibid., 15.

[310] Ibid., 16.

[311] Ibid., 17.

[312] Ibid.

the pursuit of selfish needs, but rather in "obedience to God."[313] Ramsey wrote that, although the Western Europe and the United States were free from the surveillance and censorship that operated behind the Iron Curtain, there were dangers that "lurked" within the very freedoms cherished by those who lived within democratic, capitalist nations. One of those dangers was an insular complacency. "We cannot defend freedom in the West merely by building a rampart around it," he wrote. "The countries which are prosperous must go to the aid of the countries where there is poverty and hunger. . . ."[314] Unless the prosperous West were willing to share its wealth and knowledge with the less fortunate nations of the world, its global preeminence would be decadent and meaningless.

In February, 1963, Ramsey published an article entitled "Sex and Civilization" in the *Sunday Times*. He reprinted it in *Canterbury Essays and Addresses*. The article foreshadowed many of the arguments which Ramsey made in the Lords and in his correspondence during the debate over the Homosexual Offenses Bill in 1965. "Sexual morality is a mess," he wrote.[315] There was considerable disagreement between traditionalists and reformers in British society over sexual issues. Ramsey wrote that some "would say at once that the reason is the decline of religious belief and sanction, since it is with that belief and sanction that morality has been bound up."[316] However, those with more liberal sexual mores "would say that on the contrary this belief and

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[313] Ibid.

[314] Ibid., 19.

[315] Ramsey, "Sex and Civilization," in *Canterbury Essays and Addresses*, 87-91, 88.

[316] Ibid.

sanction had been the cause of false repression, neurosis, and unhappiness."[317] Having limned two disparate views of sexual morality in the early 1960s, Ramsey instructed readers in how he believed Christians should approach sexual issues. To those who advocated further loosening of sexual morality, Ramsey wrote: "Here the Christian has to make his response."[318] The Christian who waded into such matters had an obligation to do so with humility and respect for those whose views were different. "It is not enough to point to a tradition or to assert an authority," he wrote. "Christian morality is to be *commended* to reason and conscience. We need, while abhorring evil, to try to analyze where the evil lies, and what are the causes which make for it."[319] In the Britain of the 1960s, the Church could only retain its credibility and stature on moral questions through civil, reasoned dialogue.

The archbishop demonstrated impatience with those who reduced the Christian faith to a collection of strict moral guidelines. He wrote:

> The debris of bad apologetics, false images, and narrow moralism must be cleared away. The Christian ethic is not primarily a set of rules and prohibitions: "Thou shalt," "Thou shalt not." It is not an isolated concentration upon sex, as if fornication were the only grave sin, and chastity the paramount virtue. It is not, again, a hush-hush smugness which cannot talk of sex and leaves it to be deemed unclean or smutty. . . . [T]he essence of the Christian view is that sex is to be understood only in the context of the whole relation of man and woman.[320]

Many of Ramsey's characteristic ideas about religion and sexuality were apparent in this excerpt, including his disdain for those who saw sexual morality as the paramount issue in modern society. He also articulated the need for serious, reasoned discussion of sexual

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[317] Ibid.

[318] Ibid.

[319] Ibid.

[320] Ibid.

issues. He argued that the cultural and social preoccupation with sex which he observed was not rooted in some spontaneous overflowing of sexuality in Britain, but rather in other "frustrations which caused men and women to turn to sex as an escape . . ., their insecurities, their want of fulfillment, their lack of meaningfulness in work or home or human relations, their lack of significance for the *ego*—these drive them to find in Venus a realm where they can succeed."[321] To Ramsey, what people were seeking was "the chance to achieve, to dominate, to win, to enjoy, to prove oneself to oneself and to others."[322] Whereas reactionaries saw only libertinism in the relaxed sexual mores of the 1960s, Ramsey saw deeper underlying social problems to which Christians could offer constructive remedies.

In 1964, Ramsey delivered the Holland Lectures at the University of London. The lectures were inaugurated in 1922 and named for H. Scott Holland (1847-1918), the longtime canon of St. Paul's, co-founder in 1889 of the Christian Social Union, and Regius Professor of Divinity at Oxford from 1910 until his death. The lectures' overarching theme was described at their founding as "the religion of the Incarnation in its bearing upon the social and economic life of man."[323] Given the archbishop's fondness for Victorian social theology, it was no surprise that he accepted the invitation. The result was a slim but significant volume entitled *Sacred and Secular* (1964), arguably Ramsey's most notable exploration of religion, society, and politics. These lectures contain some of his most important work as a Christian thinker.

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[321] Ibid., 89-90.

[322] Ibid., 90.

[323] Michael Ramsey, *Sacred and Secular* (New York: Harper and Row, 1964), vii.

Sacred and Secular was a product of its time and circumstances. Ramsey wrote it three years into his tenure at Canterbury and twelve years after his elevation to the episcopate, by which time he had adjusted to the broader public demands that inevitably accompanied the occupation of a major Anglican see in the age of mass media. The uninterrupted contemplation of the Regius Professor of Divinity had been replaced by the necessity of responding to the inquiries of the British press. By 1964, Ramsey had acquired enough experience in the public arena to articulate his strongly held views on the responsibility of the Church to social justice, welfare, and equality. In the Holland Lectures, Ramsey had the rare opportunity to articulate fully his social theology and the religious assumptions which lay behind it. He could not have known that, just one year after he delivered these lectures, his principles concerning religion and society would be tested under the intense scrutiny of the British people.

In his preface, Ramsey offered a summary of one of his lectures' overriding arguments: "Christianity should be seen in more close relation to the secular life of man and that Christians should be sensitive to the presence of God within the secular world."[324] The scholar who had devoted volume after theological volume to liturgical, ecclesiastical, and historical questions was now an Archbishop of Canterbury committed, in his own idiosyncratic fashion, to an activist approach on the part of the Anglican Church to issues of a social or political nature. Within a matter of months, Ramsey would commit himself to defending racial minorities and homosexuals, in the face of vicious attacks from conservative elements of the British media and political establishment. The contrast with Archbishop Fisher could not have been plainer.

[324] Ibid., ix.

Christianity cannot be understood as a religion existing in a separate spiritual plane, away from the petty concerns of contemporary life. On the contrary, the Incarnation had embedded Christ's presence within the secular world, and it was the task of the Church to proclaim the sanctity of humankind and to promote government policies that affirmed this as well.

Christ's life, ministry, and crucifixion had permanently altered our temporal world. In Ramsey's view, this new reality created serious obligations on the part of Christians to bear witness to Christ's message: "The duality which forms the subject of our discussion . . . is rooted in the belief that God is the creator of the world and, within it, of man in his own image. This doctrine gives constant significance to the world in which man lives, and at the same time sees man's greatest significance to lie beyond the world."[325] He argued that our human understanding of both Christ's sacrifice and our creation in God's image is what gives us our awareness of the divide between what Ramsey called in his subtitle "the otherworldly and this-worldly aspects of Christianity." These two aspects were, in Ramsey's mind, intertwined and only truly comprehended within the context of each other.

The influence of Maurice's Incarnational theology was present in Ramsey's assertion that humankind's consciousness of an "otherworldly" reality "gives him a meaning far beyond this world, and it gives to this world the character of a preparation for eternity."[326] What Ramsey's critics in the 1960s decried as permissiveness can be better understood through his writings as a willingness to engage and perhaps positively

[325] Ibid., 2.

[326] Ibid., 3.

to affect trends such as secularization, the breakup of the traditional family, and racial tensions resulting from immigration—rather than merely blaming widespread social problems on "moral laxity." Like Maurice and Westcott before him, Ramsey was not inclined to condemn society on behalf of reactionary social mores. The conservative tendency to conflate "morality" with "sexuality" was an ever-present source of irritation to the archbishop. Ramsey was much less interested in enforcing doctrine than he was in contributing, through his writings and public utterances, to the development of a more humane and tolerant society. In his view, this came much closer to the fulfillment of the Gospel than any other contribution he could make.

The duty of the Christian to bear witness to his or her "otherworldly" obligations has been a source of conflict from the earliest days of the faith. Ramsey attributed to the ancient Christian martyrs an intense consciousness of and longing for the divine presence. However, he asserted that this "otherworldliness" was not specific to the historical context of the times, but rather inherent to the Christian faith itself:

> Was the intense otherworldliness of the first Christians in part an immature excitement about the imminence of the second coming of Christ? Certainly it seems that this expectation was held by many Christians of the first generation as some of the books of the New Testament show. But the otherworldliness was not confined to that expectation. In some of the New Testament writings, the emphasis is on the present union of the Christians with Christ through the indwelling Spirit and present realization of eternal life in his name; and in those writings also the otherworldliness is to be felt, both in the unworldly bias of the present life and the hope of a future consummation of the present union with Christ.[327]

Ramsey's staunch belief in a divine presence within the temporal realm leant an optimistic cast to much of his social theology and political activism—a belief that the Church could point the way toward a truly Christian society, dependent upon

[327] Ramsey, *Sacred and Secular*, 12.

humankind's recognition of its own God-given sanctity. This aspect of his thought was in stark contrast with the social views of Gore, the main influence of his early career, and had its origins in Maurice and Temple.

As the previous chapter demonstrated, Ramsey rejected an Adamic view of humankind as irrevocably sinful; but this did not make him an idealist. One of his main criticisms of some of his predecessors in Anglican social theology was their quasi-utopian visions of a future Christian society. Ramsey outlined the variety of Christian perspectives on human nature, which "range from a view of man as totally depraved to a view (which I hold to be the orthodox belief) that the world though deranged by sin is still intrinsically good and that man though entangled in sin is still in the divine image."[328] This belief in humankind's goodness was one of the central tenets of the archbishop's thought, and a common theme in his writings on social and political questions. While the lines between the divine and the temporal realms were usually distinct, Ramsey was concerned largely with the areas in which they overlapped.

The Christian transformation of society was impossible without a Church willing to exhort the people to a deeper and more authentically Christian piety: "Christian thought is unable to conceive the reign of God upon earth *apart from a transforming of humanity into the likeness of Christ* at his coming and history into a new and unimaginable relation to God beyond history."[329] The Church must be the conduit to this new relationship, but not by offering a self-contained refuge from the realities of daily life in modern society. Ramsey dismissed this sort of piety as mere "religion," a

[328] Ibid., 5.

[329] Ibid., 23. Italics added.

preoccupation with the divine in which religious practice and identity become ends in themselves rather than the means to an end. This perhaps explains one of the more perplexing aspects of Ramsey's intellectual life, which is why, given his deep identification with Anglo-Catholicism and the historical Church, there was such a glaring absence of any notable influence by the Oxford Movement on his writings. The partisan conflicts that motivated Froude, Newman, and Pusey, particularly their obsession with doctrine, gave their works an element of insular "religion" which Ramsey found disturbing.

Ramsey wrote that doctrine was of interest only insofar as it helped to make men and women conscious of their closeness to Christ, "not only 'beyond' our present existence but 'within' it, underlying it, defining its most significant aspect."[330] In a work written nearly twenty years before *Sacred and Secular*, Ramsey had praised Bishop Westcott's writings for reminding late nineteenth-century readers of "the New Testament belief that the spiritual and material are not at permanent variance; both are created by God who wills that both shall be redeemed and exalted."[331] In some of his most illuminating writing on the topic, Ramsey addressed the idea of Christian duty in a chapter entitled "The Christian and the Secular World." Here he argued that the human conscience was "God-given" and a place "where the Christian can perceive the presence of God in the world," but that "the operations of conscience can be perverted and its findings can be distorted by wrong assumptions."[332] These perverted consciences are,

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[330] Ibid., 29.

[331] Ramsey, *The Resurrection of Christ*, 48.

[332] Ramsey, *Sacred and Secular*, 62.

Ramsey wrote, frequently the result of fear of the secular world. The Church has, consequently, "the Christian duty of educating consciences in the light of Christian truth," in a manner informed by its reverence for the Christian conscience.[333] Nowhere else in his entire corpus would Ramsey so clearly articulate his personal vision of the Church's social and political role—to educate the people to overcome their reflexive fundamentalism and anxiety over the rapid social and economic transformations of post-war society. He believed that fear of the secular world had had disastrous consequences, especially in the Church's responses to biblical criticism and to Darwin's writings on evolution and natural selection.[334]

In its more extreme forms, this fear of the secular world sometimes led to a complete withdrawal from social and political affairs and an unwillingness to acknowledge any moral worth outside of religion. To an Incarnational thinker such as Ramsey, this approach to Christianity entailed a denial of the divine elements at work within the secular world—those areas of intersection between the divine and the temporal. He wrote that "Christians can more effectively bear witness to the need for the fulfillment of secular goods if they are first genuinely interested in them as good in themselves."[335] He continued: "So it is that the Christian Church . . . has the difficult but fascinating task of living in the heart of the secular world, coming alongside all the good which is there, and at the same time lovingly upholding a critique of the secular world in the light of the supernatural."[336] This position animated most of Ramsey's writings on

[333] Ibid.

[334] Ibid., 63.

[335] Ibid., 65.

[336] Ibid.

religion and social and political questions after his first tentative contributions in the 1940s. Only a Church committed to "educating consciences" in light of contemporary knowledge could possibly bring society closer to the Kingdom of Christ. This was Ramsey's approach to these problems throughout his tenure in the episcopate, and increasingly so after he became Primate of All England. The Church had a "duty" to proclaim Christ's message, and along with that evangelism came the necessity of action from the Church and its hierarchy, anointed with the Holy Spirit after the Resurrection.

In 1972, Ramsey published *The Christian Priest Today*, a collection of charges which he had delivered at ordination ceremonies during his years at Canterbury. The book would become one of his most popular works. In his introduction, Ramsey listed some of the problems that confronted Anglican clergy in the early 1970s, each of which he would address in the book: "The strength of contemporary secularism, the uncertainties about faith, the enhanced role of the laity wherever Church life is vigorous with a kind of anti-clericalism as its concomitant, the feeling after non-institutional forms of Christian service, and the doubts about the role of the clergy in society all deserve and receive discussion."[337] He wrote that his book would attempt to explain what a priest *is* as well as what a priest *does*.

Although he did not include politics in his list, Ramsey devoted an entire chapter to the topic. He urged ordinands to recognize the need for constructive engagement with contemporary society "unless Christianity is to recede into a vacuum."[338] No one understood better than Ramsey the perils that awaited priests who spoke out on the issues

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[337] Ramsey, *The Christian Priest Today* (London: SPCK, 1972), 1.

[338] Ibid., 34.

of the day. He wrote: “Politics is unavoidable and it takes different forms in different ages. Your own ministry is going to be exercised at a time when certain social issues are raising their heads with new and intense force.”[339] Among the issues that he considered particularly urgent, he listed “race, poverty, the third world, violence, pollution.”[340] He criticized those who retreated into a Christianity that focused solely on the inner salvation and sanctity of the individual. In extreme cases, this approach entailed countenancing injustice. “I recall congregations of white Christians who would be antagonized by the presence of black Christians worshipping with them,” he wrote. “I recall congregations who were unaware that any questions of Christian conscience are posed by their enjoyment of a very high standard of comfort not far from places of desperate poverty and squalor.”[341] Despite the congregations’ complicity in what Ramsey believed to be un-Christian behavior, he laid the blame for such insularity squarely on the priests who led them: “But it is about the priest that we are thinking specially, and both these illustrations . . . imply a priest who is blithely unaware that anything is amiss so long as souls are ‘converted’ and ‘saved.’”[342] He also criticized priests who viewed Holy Orders simply as a license for social activism, which was dangerous to clergy when it led them to neglect the spiritual content of their duties.

Having outlined two forms of priesthood which he considered to be deficient, Ramsey offered “some guidelines towards a better way than those which I have just been

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[339] Ibid.

[340] Ibid.

[341] Ibid., 35.

[342] Ibid.

pillorying."[343] He wrote that the first priestly priority "is to preach the gospel to men and women so that they may be converted to our Lord. But if a person is to be truly converted the conversion must embrace all his personal and social relationships. He does not exist in a vacuum."[344] A priest should convert with an eye towards the totality of a person's various roles in life, whether familial, social, or professional, for the goal was to transform that person's interactions in all aspects of their existence. "[T]he Christ to whom you convert," he wrote, "wants the whole of [the convert]."[345] Through conversion to Christ, every form of private or public social interaction should be transformed in light of Christian truth. Here was where much of the real work of social change could be done—through the spiritual and moral transformation wrought by conversion.

Ramsey turned to the question of right and wrong. For priests, "it follows that through its concern with the context of human lives the Church of God is bound to make judgements about what is right and wrong in human relationships in society."[346] The question that confronted the priest was how to apply Christian principles in modern situations that were not inherently religious in nature. This was often a more challenging undertaking than it appeared to be. "Some of the basic Christian principles I would describe as pre-political rather than political," Ramsey wrote. "For instance, I do not think it can be said that democracy or majority rule as such is a Christian principle; and

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[343] Ibid., 36.

[344] Ibid.

[345] Ibid.

[346] Ibid., 37.

we remember that Christ sometimes showed contempt for the views of majorities."[347] Here Ramsey diverged from the hypothetical politically motivated priest whom he had portrayed earlier in his chapter. He did not see modern democratic politics as a fulfillment of the Gospel. Rather, politics could at times be a means towards an end whose effect could reflect the values of Christ. He wrote: "What is . . . a Christian principle is the equal right of every person created in God's image to the full realization of his powers of mind and body, and this includes full and free citizenship with democracy as a corollary."[348] He exhorted priests to differentiate between the freedom to self-actualize which he believed was a positive aspect of modern democratic politics, and the problems that inevitably accompanied the freedom to do whatever one wants.

Ramsey considered the problems that a secularizing society presented to clergy who wished to influence public debates. He argued that it was not only the clergy who could bring about positive Christian social change, but also lay Christians. "It seems to me that a variety of media come into view," Ramsey wrote. "There are matters which should be so much the stuff of ordinary Christian conviction that Christian people influence society in respect of them by every sort of witness and pressure."[349] Anglican bishops had to consider carefully the ways in which they chose to communicate, linking traditional (but not unnecessarily censorious) Christian teachings in a way that would resonate with the times. He wrote: "There are matters on which the Church's leaders in their teaching role must declare the main principles with enough specific illustration or

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[347] Ibid.

[348] Ibid., 37-38.

[349] Ibid., 38.

parable to be relevant and intelligible," however "certain distinctions must be drawn."[350] In the effort to articulate Christian solutions to social problems, one had to be sure not to denigrate the views of other Christians: "It is one thing to state main Christian principles, or to denounce a particular downright evil. It is another thing to commend a particular programme, on which the technical skills and wisdom of competent Christians may differ, and to say 'This is the Christian programme,' as if to unchurch or label as second-grade any Christians who might for good reasons dissent.'"[351] Ramsey noted the example of William Temple, whose talent for synthesis and penchant for acknowledging the fallibility of his own views won many converts to his socialist Christian vision. He argued that Temple always recognized the distinction "between the role of the Church in teaching principles in its pronouncements and the role of Christian citizens, inspired by those principles, in carrying them unselfconsciously with their own skill and wisdom into public affairs, in national and local government, in industry and commerce, and in every field of life open to them."[352] If communicated properly, the former could influence the latter.

Priestly humility and the importance of the "otherworldly" in Christian religious life were, Ramsey asserted, both indispensable to the effective communication of Anglican teaching. He wrote:

> In bearing witness in this manner in the political and social realms the Church will see every part of its mission in the total perspective of the reconciliation of mankind to God and of heaven as the goal for every man and woman made in the divine image. This grasp of the total perspective will prevent us from substituting

[350] Ibid.

[351] Ibid.

[352] Ibid., 39.

> the denunciation of the misdeeds of other communities for our own repentance and our own response to the way of holiness. . . . It will prevent us also from allowing our concern for physical suffering and material welfare to diminish our concern for the eternal life in another world which is the destiny of every man or woman who does not forfeit it. . . . *Our concern as Christians, and no less as priests, is with a divine order embracing heaven and earth, and with its reflection in every part of human affairs. This is the true context of our witness within the social scene.* Our otherworldly calling tells us of the goal and helps us not to lose heart or lose patience as we witness to justice and brotherhood and human dignity in the community where we are.[353]

Ramsey moved from grand pronouncements on the priestly calling to specific advice for ordinands which he drew from "an experience of public affairs which has been fairly stormy."[354] He denied any "oracular authority," and admitted the he understood "how hard it is to be sure whether one is saying too much or too little, or being too timid or too rash."[355] He warned that parishes and even whole national denominations (he cited the Episcopal Church in the United States) could be overwhelmed by unforeseen social and cultural currents for which Christians were unprepared, or from which they had previously believed themselves to be immune.

To illustrate one example of major change which he had observed since his early adulthood, he turned to race relations. What had once been acceptable among liberal whites and blacks was no longer tenable in the post-colonial 1960s. "Notice also the new role which the race problem is assuming in many parts of the world," he wrote. "To my generation with its old-fashioned liberalism the race problem meant getting white people and black people to be kind to one another. To your generation . . . [it] means the seething unrest of black people who will tolerate white domination no longer, and who

[353] Ibid., 40. Italics added.

[354] Ibid.

[355] Ibid.

ask why if it was right for white people in Europe to fight for liberation from Hitler it is wrong for them to fight liberation from their oppressors."[356] He urged priests to interact with the laity, to whom they were charged to teach Christian principles, and from whom the clergy had much to learn. Priests and laypersons should "study together and form right judgements based on knowledge and Christian insight," and this was especially true for such issues as "industrial relations, the third world in its relation to our world, war and violence, obscenity and censorship, [and] race relations."[357] The priest must be cautious, however, to avoid substituting a serious commitment to social and political causes for daily pastoral work and private religious devotion. In *The Christian Priest Today*, Ramsey dealt only briefly with politics, but his arguments in the book amounted to a distillation of his beliefs about the necessity of political engagement and rational analysis of controversial issues.

5. Conclusion

Ramsey's social theology was strongly Incarnational and avowedly political. He urged his fellow Christians, whether clergy or laity, to try to understand contemporary society and to differentiate between immorality and evolving social mores. He exhorted Christians to live by what he believed to be the inherently liberal principles of their faith, and in the process to influence society in a manner congruent with the teachings of Christ. To repeat his memorable phrase from *Sacred and Secular*, Christian clergy had a responsibility to "educate the consciences" of others, while remaining respectful of divergent views. Priestly humility was a recurrent theme in his social theological

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[356] Ibid., 41.

[357] Ibid.

writings, and he believed that this was especially necessary given the Church's diminished stature in the Britain of the 1960s. He argued that the political and social establishments in Britain had to be concerned for the welfare of minorities and the poor, and that it was the duty of the Church to remind them of these obligations.

CHAPTER IV

A POLITICAL ARCHBISHOP

1. The Theologian as Public Figure

Archbishop Michael Ramsey approached social and political questions with a coherent theology that he derived from both the liberal catholic and the Christian Socialist traditions. Ramsey's scholarly work in biblical theology and Anglican intellectual history informed his social theology. In the previous chapter, we demonstrated the importance to Ramsey of the social content of religious life, whether in theology or in worship practices. The complexity of Ramsey's thought and the variety of his intellectual interests have frequently obscured his commitment to social and political reforms. Ramsey's political activism as Primate of All England was invariably on behalf of the disadvantaged in society, including homosexuals, Asian and African immigrants, and those condemned to death in the British justice system. In Ramsey's ideal of the Kingdom of Christ, the Church had a special obligation to defend those who were least able to defend themselves.

Before he became Ramsey's biographer, Michael De-la-Noy served as press officer to the archbishop between 1967 and 1970. He observed Ramsey at close hand during many of the most controversial episodes of his primacy. In his biography of Ramsey, De-la-Noy quoted from a speech on the "three outstanding moral issues on a world scale" that the Primate delivered in 1960 while still Archbishop of York. For Ramsey, these were "the urgency of radical disarmament, the need for a radical change in the attitude of races, white and black, towards one another, and the need for rich countries

to give resources to help those in terrible poverty."[358] De-la-Noy contemplated more of Ramsey's statements on social and political questions:

> "It is outrageous," he said, "that some countries enjoy a high standard of living while others are dangerously near the famine line." He knew next to nothing of international banking, but to him, the moral issue was perfectly clear. He also saw quite clearly—for a glance at the diverse lives and times of Becket, Cranmer, Laud and William Temple told him so—that "the problem of the priest and politics" was unavoidable, even though it might take different forms in different ages. "The selfish motive in all affairs is always wrong," he would tell ordinands, "and the altruistic motive is always right. Wealth is always dangerous to its possessor, and the rich man can only with difficulty be saved. There is no discrimination between races in God's eyes, and there must be no discrimination in man's eyes."[359]

Ramsey believed that the Church's most important role was to advocate and possibly even facilitate social conciliation and the alleviation of inequality, whether economic, racial, or legal. Like the Christ of the Gospels, Ramsey was never part of "the establishment," and he was by nature suspicious of social, political, and religious elites who reflexively opposed any challenge to their authority.

In 1974, just before his retirement from Canterbury, Ramsey appeared as a guest on the popular "Thought for the Day" BBC radio segment, on which guests discussed current issues from a religious perspective. The archbishop's contribution to the program focused on the intense social and political strife that gripped Britain in the twilight of the Heath era (1970-1974), a period marked by inflation, bitter trade union strikes, the three-day workweek, and appalling violence in Northern Ireland. He asked, "What has happened to us as a nation?", and diagnosed Britain's problems as "Too much love of money and pleasure, too little remembering the people who suffer very much, too little

[358] De-la-Noy, *Michael Ramsey: A Portrait* (London: Fount, 1991), 177-178. The words quoted are De-la-Noy's.

[359] Ibid., 178.

remembering that *to serve people who suffer is to find Christ himself in them.*"[360] Kenneth Leech noted that Ramsey's social theology firmly opposed individualism, whether in the Church or in society as a whole, and that Ramsey had gone so far as to describe Christianity as the "extinction" of individualism.[361] As he long had, Ramsey viewed the Incarnation as a universally transformative event for humanity, regardless of race, religion, or class; indeed, the Incarnation would be meaningless if this were not the case. The role of Christians in modern society was to affirm the meaning of the Incarnation by practicing mutual tolerance and altruism—to see oneself in others so fully as to abolish the individualism that created social divisions and human misery.

Ramsey wrote in *Sacred and Secular* that one of the main obligations of the Christian faith was to "educate consciences in the light of Christian truth." Fear of the secular world could have disastrous consequences for Christians, particularly if they turned to fundamentalism as an antidote to modernity. Rigid doctrinal positions based upon censorious use of passages from the Bible constantly irritated Ramsey, as he made clear in his correspondence. He was frequently at pains to clarify the underlying moral principles that motivated him to take the positions he did. For Ramsey, the education of consciences meant making his fellow Britons aware of the consequences of what he believed to be unjust laws or government policies—the suffering and humiliation of homosexuals, the isolation and demonization of immigrants based upon their race, the subjugation of more than eighty percent of the Rhodesian population under a racist

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[360] Ramsey, transcript of appearance on "Thought for the Day" (20 February 1974) in the Ramsey Papers, v. 321, 176-178, 177. Italics added.

[361] Kenneth Leech, "Glory in Trouble: The Social Theology of Michael Ramsey," in *Michael Ramsey as Theologian* (ed. Robin Gill and Lorna Kendall), 101-123, 106.

regime. The advancement of civil rights entailed a recognition of the human dignity that Ramsey believed was the foundation of a genuinely Christian society. Those who used Christianity to justify their opposition to basic civil rights were actively undermining the realization of a more Christian society.

In October 1971, Ramsey participated in a radio interview on the topic of the Troubles in Northern Ireland. He asserted that the roots of the conflict were "not troubles about religion, they are troubles about religion when it is mixed up with other things."[362] Fear, he argued, was a primary motivation in the violence that was tearing Northern Irish society apart, and when that fear became entangled with religion, the consequences were horrific. What were the sorts of fears to which Ramsey referred? "The fear of political and social groups, the fear of their own survival, the fear of dominance by others."[363] In the case of Northern Ireland, he argued that violence erupted "when these fears are mixed up with irrational historical memories leading to bigotry."[364] Ramsey exhorted Christians to put aside their fears and prejudices and evaluate the issues in terms of the human costs resulting from government policies. This was, at times, a losing battle, as the archbishop himself acknowledged in some of his autobiographical documents. However, there was an undeniable continuity between Ramsey's social theology, which the previous two chapters have demonstrated to have been of significantly more importance to his career than previous scholars have acknowledged, and his activism as Archbishop of Canterbury.

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[362] Ramsey, transcript of radio interview (5 October 1971) in the Ramsey Papers, v. 205, 144-145, 144.

[363] Ibid.

[364] Ibid., 145.

This chapter will analyze Ramsey's involvement in the public debates over the decriminalization of homosexual acts, the crisis over Rhodesian independence, and government policy towards Commonwealth immigrants. He almost never used explicitly theological language in his speeches or during debates in the Lords, but the manner in which he dissected issues and the themes that he emphasized in his arguments can only be fully understood in the context of his theological and historical writings. The Incarnation was the theological lynchpin of Ramsey's public and private religious life. For him as for Gore, belief in Christ as a divine figure rather than just a moral or religious teacher made the Incarnation much more than a merely symbolic element in his social theology, and also lent urgency to many of his pronouncements. His fundamental concern was for legal and social equality, whether in Britain or abroad. Like Maurice, he believed in dialogue and interaction as antidotes to intolerance and conflict. The recognition of oneself in other human beings was an ideal to which Ramsey referred time and again in his social theological writings, as well as in his speeches and letters. "Prejudice" was a word that appeared often in Ramsey's writings, and he did not hesitate to level that charge against those who supported policies that he believed had adverse effects on society. He spoke of the need to recognize and overcome irrational hostility towards those whose sexual or cultural identities were foreign to most white Britons.

In addition to his Incarnational theology, Ramsey was motivated in his political activism by the same Asquithian spirit of reform and social justice that had led him to the presidency of the Oxford Union and a burgeoning political career in the 1920s. As Archbishop of Canterbury, he continued to have a profound belief in political and legal reform as a means of creating a more moral and compassionate society. He had little use

for public opinion as a guide to politics or social issues, although he admitted in some of his autobiographical writings that he had felt hurt by the attacks that he endured for expressing his views. In each of the three controversies that will be examined in this chapter, the archbishop supported policies that were opposed by considerable majorities of the British public. As a religious leader, he often found himself in the unusual position of exhorting the public to support liberal reforms by looking at the issues in terms of human suffering rather than traditional religious morality. Conservatives often voiced their distrust for Ramsey. He recognized the arduous intellectual and rhetorical labor required to change the public's mind about certain issues, particularly those involving race and sex, but he believed that he had an obligation as a Christian to make the effort.

2. Homosexuality and Legal Reform

In the early 1950s, after a series of widely publicized same-sex sexual scandals in society, the second Churchill government commissioned Lord Wolfenden to form a committee to evaluate Britain's criminal laws against homosexual acts. The committee held its first meeting in 1954, but its report did not appear until 1957. In an article published in 1960, J. E. Hall Williams examined the legal and social issues involved in reforming the laws. He wrote that a "philosophical and moral debate" had "arisen out of [the committee's] recommendation" for major reforms, and that the committee approached the issues from the belief that "it was not part of the business of the criminal law [to interfere] with the private lives of citizens" unless an "overriding public interest" made such intervention necessary.[365] The committee analyzed the reasoning behind the anti-homosexual acts laws in light of the legality of diverse forms of heterosexual

[365] J. E. Hall Williams, "Sex Offenses: The British Experience," in *Law and Contemporary Problems*, 25 (2), Spring 1960, 334-360, 353-354.

“misbehavior,” including fornication, adultery, and prostitution (although solicitation was illegal). Arrests for homosexual acts nearly tripled in the decade after the end of the Second World War, from 2,331 in 1946 to 6,644 in 1955.[366] Statistics such as these only encouraged those who supported legal punishment for homosexuals. In Williams’ estimation, one of the most intractable aspects of this legal reform debate was what he referred to as “public morality.” He quoted H. L. A. Hart, then a professor of jurisprudence at Oxford, who argued against turning “general moral feeling into criminal legislation,” because too often such laws were based upon “ignorance, misunderstanding, and superstition about the matter, however much indignation and disgust is felt about it.”[367] This legal argument was remarkably similar to the theological arguments that informed Ramsey’s views on the matter.

The Wolfenden Report recommended the decriminalization of homosexual acts for men over the age of 21 years; not surprisingly, its publication caused a firestorm of controversy. In his biography of Ramsey, Owen Chadwick wrote that “the object of [the report’s] recommendations were (I) to help homosexuals not to feel persecuted and therefore to feel at home in society; (II) to avert the threat of blackmail which they suffered; and (III) to free them to seek psychiatric help without fear of consequences.”[368] Despite the wide publicity that greeted its release, the Wolfenden Report had little impact on legal policy until the middle of the 1960s. Chadwick argued that politicians of both parties were too fearful of the political consequences to introduce in Parliament a bill that

[366] Ibid., 359.

[367] Ibid.

[368] Chadwick, 144.

would implement the report's recommendations.[369] Within the Church hierarchy, however, there was significant support for legal reform on the issue. A memorandum prepared for Ramsey by his assistant, Robert Beloe, noted that the Homosexual Law Reform Society had among its members the Bishops of London, St. Albans, Manchester, Southwark, Birmingham, Exeter, and Winchester, as well as the Archbishop of York, Donald Coggan.[370] In the wake of the Wolfenden Report's publication, the Church Assembly (the governing body of the Anglican Church) voted in support of decriminalizing homosexual acts by a margin of 155 to 138.

Not until 12 May 1965, when Lord Arran (whom De-la-Noy described as "a rather dotty and endearing peer . . . who contributed wildly controversial and eccentric articles to the *Evening News*") introduced the Homosexual Offenses Bill (HOB) in the House of Lords, did the proposals in the Wolfenden Report appear to be moving towards legal enactment.[371] Within a matter of days, Ramsey had committed himself to help Arran maneuver the bill through the Lords. On 25 May, after a debate on the bill, Ramsey wrote an enthusiastic letter to congratulate Arran on the "great success which you had in the House of Lords last night. I am glad that you showed yourself ready for improvements and I shall be glad to try and help in that direction. I wonder what would be the best way for us to keep in touch over amendments?"[372] Arran desired Ramsey's assistance as one of the bill's main advocates in the Lords because he believed that the

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[369] Ibid.

[370] Robert Beloe, letter to Michael Ramsey (22 May 1965) in the Ramsey Papers, v. 78, 25.

[371] De-la-Noy, 179.

[372] Ramsey, letter to Lord Arran (25 May 1965) in the Ramsey Papers, v. 78, 70.

support of the Archbishop of Canterbury would significantly improve the bill's chances of passing. He wrote that Ramsey's letter had "rejoiced" him, and added:

> I am very proud to belong to such a responsible and progressive body as the House of Lords. . . . But, as I said in the debate, best of all would be if the amendments were to be tabled by yourself. The House could not fail to be impressed, and I think the Bill would have a better chance of getting through, if it were felt that the Lords spiritual were actively behind it.
> The Bishops spoke splendidly.[373]

Never in the thirteen years since his arrival in the Lords had Ramsey been as involved in the legislative process as he would be with the HOB.

The archbishop's role in the passage of the bill, which finally became law in 1967, drew intense anger and derision upon him, both in the Lords and in public opinion. He later wondered whether he had made the right decision by taking such a central part in the legislative process: "Lord Arran's bill was more difficult and involved a great deal of unpleasantness. I took a good deal of part in the bill during its committee stage and perhaps it was a mistake to be so much involved rather than to have made say a couple of speeches on the general principles."[374] The debates in the Lords were frequently contentious. The bill's most vociferous opponents included Field Marshall Montgomery, who rarely spoke in the Lords before the introduction of Arran's bill, and especially two former Lord Chancellors, Viscount Dilhorne and Viscount Kilmuir. Chadwick wrote that Ramsey had "never in his life ran up against a tougher opposition than that which he now encountered."[375] The negative publicity that confronted Ramsey would only be

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[373] Lord Arran, letter to Michael Ramsey (26 May 1965) in the Ramsey Papers, v. 78, 71.

[374] Ramsey, "1965," unpublished document in the Ramsey Papers, v. 322, 131-138, 133.

[375] Chadwick, 147.

compounded later that year after he advocated military intervention against the Rhodesian government.

Ramsey's letters and speeches on the topic of the HOB demonstrated the influence of Maurice to a remarkable degree, and not solely in their theological assumptions. In an essay entitled "Reason and Society: An Approach to F. D. Maurice," James Clayton wrote that Maurice had a great belief in the ability of the human mind to "perceive the highest truths," and that he had a "view of reason as the power to grasp the ultimate truth, as this is related to man's inner drive towards a universal human community."[376] Maurice insisted that the human race was not condemned to an earthly existence mired in sin and mutual antagonism. Christians could be educated to recognize their obligations to their fellow human beings, and social conflict could be resolved by appealing to their reason, even if the process might be difficult and at times discouraging. Clayton wrote that Maurice's emphasis on reason as a means of social transformation, combined with his belief in the "divine redemptive activity as the presupposition of every good in man," "fascinated mid-twentieth-century interpreters of Maurice."[377] Ramsey's work as an intellectual historian and theologian were shaped by Maurician Incarnationalism and the liberal catholic tradition that took inspiration from him. On homosexuality as on other issues, Ramsey exhorted his fellow Christians to approach the specific issues in a rational manner rather than be guided by emotion or prejudice. In *From Gore to Temple*, he had written that liberal catholics labored to reconcile the Church to modernity. As one of them, Ramsey devoted himself to that task as well.

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[376] James Clayton, "Reason and Society: An Approach to F. D. Maurice," in *The Harvard Theological Review,* 65 (3), July 1972, 305-335, 306.

[377] Ibid.

On 12 May 1965, Ramsey rose in the House of Lords to deliver a detailed explanation of the need for Lord Arran's bill, and what the implications its enactment would have for British society. The written version of the speech demonstrated the care and seriousness with which the archbishop approached the issue, a topic which he knew was fraught with considerable negative sentiment among the public. He began:

> My Lords, I am glad that the noble Earl has brought this Motion to the House. I wish to support him. I want to start by making clear what is the moral standpoint from which I approach this question. I believe that homosexual acts are always wrong in the sense that they use in a wrong way human organs for which the right use is intercourse between men and women within marriage. Amidst the modern talk about the "new morality" I would uphold the belief that just as fornication is always wrong so homosexual acts are always wrong. At the same time, wrong acts in this case as in others can have various degrees of culpability attached to them. In this case there are not only degrees of culpability but also varieties of causes of the trouble and categories of the trouble, psychological and sociological.[378]

From the beginning of his first public statement on the HOB, Ramsey was careful to associate homosexual acts and heterosexual fornication, both of which he viewed as serious violations of traditional Christian teaching about sexual morality. He commented that "not all sins are . . . given the status of crimes, not even such sins as the adulterous conduct of a man or woman, which can smash up the life of a family and bring misery to a whole family of children."[379] This proved to be a particularly effective response to those who saw the HOB as part of a general decline into "permissiveness," and the archbishop deployed this argument frequently in his letters on the subject.

The comments that Ramsey made on homosexuality as a psychological and moral problem that could often be "corrected" through therapy reflected the views of the

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[378] Ramsey, remarks in the House of Lords (12 May 1965), at http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/lords/1965/may/12/homosexual-offences.

[379] Ibid.

medical and psychological professionals who had been consulted for the Wolfenden Report. He said that "compassion is always called for" in the therapy of homosexuals.[380] Perhaps in anticipation of attacks over his supposed endorsement of "immorality," he added: "It is not an exclusively clinical field. Moral responsibility does come into it and, with responsibility, guilt, forgiveness, discipline and choice. If medicine does its part, so does law and so does the cure of souls."[381] These were Ramsey's most specific comments on how the passage of the bill would affirm morality. He accorded religion an essential role in this process, but he asserted that legal reform was necessary to create a social environment in which homosexuals would not feel persecuted, and thus would be better able to seek treatment if they so desired. In the months that followed, Ramsey would often refer hostile correspondents to these comments in his 12 May speech.

Having dealt with the clinical and religious aspects of homosexuality, Ramsey turned to the legal reasoning behind Arran's bill. He observed that the bill would only legalize private acts between consenting adults, leaving other offenses (e.g., soliciting sex in public restrooms) punishable by law as they already were. Referring to the moderate nature of the legislation, he claimed that "it would be a gross misrepresentation of this particular change to say, in sweeping words, that such a change would legalise homosexual behaviour."[382] In outlining his motivations for supporting the HOB, Ramsey explained that he viewed the issues in terms of "reason and justice, and on considerations of the good of the community."[383] He believed that society and its laws should rectify

[380] Ibid.

[381] Ibid.

[382] Ibid.

[383] Ibid.

injustice when they had the opportunity to do so, and that the persecution of homosexuals through the assignment of extraordinary legal penalties for their private behaviour could not be justified when one examined the issues in the wider context of sexual immorality. To target homosexuals without comparable penalties for heterosexuals would be akin to sanctioning heterosexual sin, if the arguments of many HOB opponents were to be taken to their logical conclusion. He asserted:

> If the line can reasonably be drawn anywhere, homosexual acts in private between consenting adults fall properly on the same side of the line as fornication. To say this is not to condone the wrongness of the acts, but to put them in the realm of private moral responsibility. I believe that the present location of the line gives a sense of injustice and bitterness, which helps morality no more than would a law which made fornication a crime.[384]

Ramsey referred to his predecessor at Canterbury, Geoffrey Fisher, who in 1957 had made a speech in the Lords on the subject of the Wolfenden Report: "He argued that the existing state of the law creates fear, secretiveness, despair, and deeper involvement in some homosexual practitioners, who would like to be free to make themselves known and be helped, but dare not, lest they expose themselves and their friends to criminal proceedings."[385] In referring to Fisher's remarkably sympathetic words, Ramsey reminded his audience that his views were shared by one of the pillars of the conservative Anglican establishment.

The archbishop considered the efficacy of the existing laws as a deterrent to homosexual conduct. This was one of his favorite ripostes to those who insisted that the enactment of the HOB would encourage homosexual behavior, especially among the young. "It can hardly be argued that the law in this matter has been successful as a

[384] Ibid.

[385] Ibid.

deterrent or a means of eradicating the practices," he said.[386] Reforming the laws, especially in the case of young adult "offenders," would give them an opportunity to seek treatment appropriate to their psychological states (the Wolfenden Report detailed diverse personality types who were supposedly prone to homosexual behavior), while the existing law left them to live in sexual torment and fear of legal punishment.[387] Ramsey observed that he placed considerably more faith in the therapeutic treatment for homosexuals than did the original authors of the Wolfenden Report, whom he described as "rather pessimistic in what they said about the curing of offenders. They were no doubt naturally cautious about claiming too much for psychological methods and the evidence then before them compelled this caution."[388] He suggested that, had the report been written in 1965 rather than in 1957, it would likely have articulated a more optimistic viewpoint on the question of therapy. Ramsey concluded:

> There will be no question of thereby declaring homosexual practices to be a right use of sex. Rather will there be a greater possibility for some to find their way from wrong uses of sex and to be helped towards better uses of their energies. In the moral state of our country we need all the forces available to combat evils, of which homosexual practices are one. The proposed reforms would, I believe, help greatly by enabling a greater balance between the forces of law, morality, remedial science and the cure of souls, by promoting what is good and right.[389]

He had laid out a nuanced assessment of why legal reform for homosexual behavior was necessary. His speech was among the most detailed and carefully reasoned on the topic in the Lords' debate. Arran, for one, thought that Ramsey's work, both procedural and rhetorical, had been vital to the bill's ultimate enactment.

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[386] Ibid.

[387] Ibid.

[388] Ibid.

[389] Ibid.

The Primate steeped his speech in liberal catholic and particularly Maurician social theology, which as Paul Daffyd Jones wrote was "animated by the agency of the marginalized, the downcast, and the disenfranchised," and in which the "moral regeneration of individuals must take the leading role in alleviating social problems."[390] Certainly both of these elements were evident in his argument, which affirmed the innate worth of homosexuals despite its criticisms of homosexual behavior, and which also affirmed the right of homosexuals to live their lives without the fear of arrest or imprisonment and the social ostracism that accompanied such events. In the Maurician tradition, he based his argument for social change upon reason as well as liberal Christian religious principles. In later remarks on the HOB, Ramsey emphasized Christ's apparent indifference to homosexuality, and his arguments made his preference for the altruistic morality of the New Testament over the fire-and-brimstone morality of the Old Testament all the more powerful.

The debates in the Lords over the HOB were frequently heated, and although Ramsey did not participate in every debate, the attacks on his speech of 12 May compelled him to respond with further clarifying remarks in late June. Unfortunately for Ramsey, his attempt to respond to his critics only further inflamed the opponents of the bill, and attracted negative media coverage. Lord Kilmuir and Lord Dilhorne were especially pointed in their attacks on the Archbishop of Canterbury, whose arguments they ridiculed while wrapping themselves in the mantle of moral rectitude. On 24 May, Dilhorne rose to assure the Lords that few Anglicans supported the HOB, despite the support it received from much of the Anglican hierarchy. "I should not like it to be

[390] Jones, 206.

thought that the Church of England as a whole supports these two Archbishops and other Bishops," he said. "I happen to be an ordinary member of the Church of England. I am a church warden at my own church, and . . . I have had many letters from, and opinions expressed by, members of the Church of England who are not in agreement with their leaders on this subject."[391] The next month, Dilhorne continued his rhetorical assault on Ramsey and Coggan while offering an amendment to the HOB that would remove sodomy from the list of decriminalized homosexual acts. He asked "the most reverend Primates and the right reverend Prelates: Do they regard this conduct, sodomy, as abominable? Some of the words used by the right reverend Primate the Archbishop of Canterbury on May 12 gave me the impression—I hope it is wrong—that he equated sodomy with fornication."[392] Dilhorne described sodomy as an act of such extreme depravity that it must remain punishable by law. He concluded his remarks by asserting again that if the Archbishops of Canterbury and York believed that most of their fellow Anglicans shared their views on the legal status of homosexuals, then they were woefully out of touch with the moral beliefs of the "vast majority of members of the Church of England."[393] Dilhorne articulated a theme that would recur among reactionary Anglican Tories until well into the 1990s: that the bishops of the Church of England had not only stopped advocating for morality in the "swinging Sixties," but had actually encouraged depravity in their desire to be "relevant."

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[391] Viscount Dilhorne, remarks in the House of Lords (24 May 1965), at http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/lords/1965/may/24/sexual-offences-bill-hl-1.

[392]Dilhorne, remarks in the House of Lords (21 June 1965), at http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/lords/1965/jun/21/sexual-offences-bill-hl.

[393] Ibid.

On 21 June, Ramsey responded to Dilhorne. He analyzed the topic with a frankness that was unusual in the House of Lords in the 1960s, and which gave his opponents a further opportunity to rain opprobrium upon him. "The noble and learned Viscount put one or two questions to me and to right reverend Prelates who sit on these Benches," he said. "Let me say, not for the first time, that I regard homosexual behaviour as abominable, utterly abominable. I am a supporter of this Bill in the belief that this Bill will help and not hinder the forces making for morality in this respect."[394] Dilhorne, Ramsey pointed out, did not articulate the reasoning for his incredulity that anyone would consider homosexual sodomy (he did not acknowledge the existence of heterosexual sodomy, which would remain unrestricted under English law) to be morally comparable to fornication. "He did not give arguments for his view; he gave no real arguments at all," the archbishop observed, in a comment that betrayed some of the dislike for Dilhorne that would be evident in Ramsey's autobiographical writings from the 1970s and early 1980s.[395] He addressed the issue in detail:

> The noble and learned Viscount challenged me about the moral relationship between homosexual behaviour and fornication. I think it is extraordinarily hard for any of us to assess the relative seriousness of sins. When we start doing that we get into questions to which the Almighty Himself knows the answer and we do not. I would say that, comparing the two, homosexual behaviour has an unnaturalness about it which makes it vile. On the other hand we are encouraged to measure the vileness of sins by the question of motives and personal circumstances. I think there can be behaviour of a fornicating kind as abominable as homosexual behaviour and as damaging to the community.[396]

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[394] Ibid., Ramsey.

[395] Ibid.

[396] Ibid.

Ramsey refused to let Dilhorne make arbitrary moral distinctions not only between heterosexual and homosexual acts, but also among different homosexual acts. In words that would come to haunt him but that demonstrated his commitment to a serious discussion of the issues, Ramsey said, "I can only say that there are forms of homosexual intercourse every whit as disgusting and horrible as sodomy. Which of us can really say that we know there is a big moral distinction between anal intercourse and oral intercourse? One hates to mention such things, but by doing so one is perhaps able to clarify the issue."[397] The British media reported extensively on these remarks, and sales of the Hansard record of debates for 21 June were exceptionally high.

Ramsey speculated that the social taboo and special legal status of sodomy, which had been a capital offense since the reign of Henry VIII, were derived in part from the biblical story of Sodom and Gomorrah; however, he noted that the term "sodomite" had also been used in the Bible for those who committed sexual transgressions such as prostitution.[398] "[I]t is impossible to distinguish between the abominableness of various kinds of homosexual actions," he said, "and I do not really think it makes for morality when there is embodied in the criminal law a distinction that is not really a rational moral distinction."[399] Despite the dispassion with which the archbishop had approached the issues involved in the HOB, he became an object of antagonism for some of the bill's conservative opponents. Lord Brocket, whose wife wrote more than one impassioned letter to Ramsey during the bill's prolonged journey towards enactment, spoke in the Lords on 16 July and said of Ramsey's recent speech: "I am sorry to say that on June 21

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[397] Ibid.

[398] Ibid.

[399] Ibid.

we heard from the most reverend Primate the Archbishop of Canterbury about the various methods of doing this [having homosexual intercourse]. I am told that Hansard of that day had an enormous sale. I believe it sold even better than the books on such subjects in the bookshops."[400] The charge that his comments had encouraged prurient public interest in that day's Hansard rankled Ramsey for years to come, perhaps because it appeared to be the truth.

On 28 October, Ramsey responded to Brocket and other HOB critics in another extended speech. He was preceded in speaking that day by Brocket, who again made disparaging remarks about Ramsey, which prompted the irritated Primate to interject: "My Lords, if the noble Lord is going to speak to your Lordships . . . I may be tempted to do the same and start by asking that if the noble Lord refers to my remarks, will he please do so accurately. I recognise no sort of accuracy in the reference he has just made."[401] Provoked by his critics, he added:

> My support of this Bill has been increased by hearing, among those who have opposed it during these debates, what I can only call a really lopsided presentation of morality—a presentation which quotes the Old Testament, which takes the line that sexual sins are apparently the worst of all sins, and that homosexual sins are invariably the worst sort of sins among sexual sins. I think that such a presentation of morality is lopsided and is going to be rejected by the people of the new generation, who need a better presentation of morality to win their respect and admiration.[402]

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[400]Viscount Brocket, remarks in the House of Lords (16 June 1965), at http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/lords/1965/jul/16/sexual-offences-bill-hl.

[401] Ramsey, remarks in the House of Lords (28 October 1965), at http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/lords/1965/oct/28/sexual-offences-bill-hl.

[402] Ibid.

These comments reflected the archbishop's dislike for what he considered to be simplistic fundamentalist morality. One of his main criticisms of religious conservatives was that they were motivated by a fear of the secular world, and that this frequently led them to take positions that discredited the Church in the eyes of modern society. He argued that Christians needed to approach issues without ingrained prejudices, and to analyze them rationally and fairly.

In his remarks on 28 October, the archbishop also decried reductive arguments over one of the most serious problems which the HOB was designed to remedy: blackmail. Ramsey said: "It was stated several times in opposition to this Bill that if a man wants to avoid blackmail the thing for him to do is not to commit the offence for which he can be blackmailed. But I did not think, and I do not think, that to say that is at all helpful. It is no use saying to a man of homosexual tendencies, 'Stop having homosexual tendencies.'"[403] This sort of reasoning, he warned, undermined Christian teaching, and indicated to the youth of Britain that many in the Church would support laws that caused injustice in the name of "morality."[404]

He acknowledged the eagerness with which HOB opponents cited the Old Testament, but made "no apology for turning to the other Testament. I do not find in the teaching of Christ any use of the word 'abominable' in classifying sins, but I do find a passage in which a term very near to 'abominable' is used; namely, 'sins which defile a man.'"[405] Ramsey was citing the seventh chapter of the Gospel of St. Mark, and he listed

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[403] Ibid.

[404] Ibid.

[405] Ibid.

the sins to which “the Founder of Christianity” had referred: “fornication, theft, murder, adultery, ruthless greed, malice, fraud, envy, slander, arrogance,” of which only two were sexual in nature and none of which had anything to do with homosexuality.[406] If the sin of sodomy were so grave, he asked, then why had Christ failed to mention it among the many sins which he condemned with such precision? This was an effective argument, to which Ramsey's opponents in the House of Lords and in the general public never found a satisfactory answer. He reaffirmed his commitment to the bill by contextualizing it in light of Christ's list of “defiling sins”: “I believe that it is a presentation of morality, balanced, Christian and rational, that can win the respect and the allegiance of the younger generation, hard task though it is.”[407] He concluded his last major speech on the subject by asserting that the passage of the bill would be “an honourable chapter in the pages of your Lordships' House.”[408] His work in the Lords on behalf of the HOB was largely complete, but Ramsey continued to work as an advocate for the HOB in his clerical capacity as the spiritual leader of the Church of England.

Ramsey's correspondence is one of the most significant sources of information on his political and social activism in the 1960s. Often, the letters he received from individual Britons were highly critical of the positions he took on political issues. Many of the letters were personally insulting and antagonistic, a reflection of the strong emotions that the issues raised in people who disagreed with the Primate. Ramsey handled most of the correspondence himself, although he often collaborated with his

[406] Ibid.

[407] Ibid.

[408] Ibid.

private secretary, Hugh Whitworth, a layman and former barrister. At times Whitworth wrote letters on Ramsey's behalf, and after consultation he annotated many of them in his own hand to note the archbishop's personal approval of their contents. In an autobiographical document that he wrote years later, Ramsey recalled that his position on homosexuality and legal reform "brought me a lot of abusive correspondence," and that he had a difficult time responding to the "piles and piles of vituperative letters" which he received.[409] In his letters, Ramsey often addressed specific criticisms of his views that his correspondents had raised, and explained his positions with more nuance and in a more personal manner than he did in his public addresses. He took seriously the task of defending his positions, and his letters were steeped in his training as a theologian, although he almost never made references to theological writings in his correspondence.

Many Britons were incredulous that the Archbishop of Canterbury would even consider supporting the Homosexual Offenses Bill. During the summer of 1965, his highly publicized role as one of the bill's principal advocates in the House of Lords sparked an influx of hostile correspondence. Ramsey received one such letter from Lady Angela Brocket, whose husband (as Whitworth acidly observed in a note in the Ramsey Papers) had been a notorious Nazi sympathizer during the Appeasement period. Lady Brocket prefaced her critical comments concerning the HOB by recounting her family's close ties to the conservative Anglican establishment:

> As I was born at Bishopthorpe, where my late father was Chaplain to the Archbishop, and a later a Prebendary of St. Paul's Cathedral with St. Mary-le-Bow, following over twenty years [as] Vicar of St. Marks [sic], I hope and trust that you will forgive my writing personally to you.

[409] Ramsey, "1965," 136.

> My husband and I were married by Archbishop Lord Lang in 1927 . . . we and our married children are so desperately concerned by the shocking and terrible result of Lord Arran's Bill in the House of Lords
> When one considers that the views of holders of the highest legal offices of the state such as two Lord Chancellors and Lord Chief Justice, coupled with the great and God fearing Lord Montgomery and many others I could mention, are against Lord Arran's Bill, should be overwhelmed by the Church on a point of the perversion of sex, I feel my heart will break for the misinterpretations that have flowed from those to whom one has, in the past, looked for the human virtues of morality, chastity, and decency.[410]

In her reference to "morality, chastity, and decency," Lady Brocket articulated a religious and moral viewpoint which particularly irritated Ramsey, who did not base his support for the bill upon any personal approval of homosexuality. Brocket considered the existence of homosexuality to be an affront to morality and decency as she defined these terms. Consequently, she expected the Church and its bishops to support laws that defined homosexuality as deviant and punished homosexuals. She considered the suffering that homosexuals experienced through legal persecution irrelevant, and certainly did not regard it as a "moral issue." This was one of the more persistent difficulties that Ramsey encountered in his attempts to educate the consciences of the British people, especially over homosexuality. Their condemnation of the behavior which the law punished was sufficient to justify the law's existence.

In his response to Lady Brocket's letter, Ramsey explained his support for the bill by again arguing that it would contribute to a more moral society. The issue for the archbishop was not whether homosexuality was immoral in itself, but whether existing laws which humiliated and punished homosexuals for private, consensual acts constituted a greater form of immorality. He wrote that he was "bound to say" that "I believe that the present Laws on that matter do not help morality, and give a good deal of hindrance

[410] Angela Brocket, letter to Michael Ramsey (1 June 1965) in the Ramsey Papers, v. 78, 115-117.

to what is right. That is why I have been anxious to see the Laws on this matter changed."[411] He continued:

> You tell me that various eminent people take an opposite view, but I ask you to believe that the Bishops and others who favor the alteration of the Laws do so on the basis of a good deal of pastoral experience as to what is and what is not helpful to the cause of morality. I am sure that even where you do not agree, you will understand and appreciate our motives.
> As to the wrongness of the sins in question and all other serious sins, we have been perfectly plain in our teaching.[412]

The conflation of homosexuality with "immorality" was one common problem for Ramsey, who did not share the intense personal loathing for homosexuality that many of his correspondents evidenced in their letters to him. One example of the "perfectly plain teaching" to which he referred was his comments on homosexuality as a form of sin in his Lords speech on 12 May. In his letters, he continued to delineate between the moral and legal aspects of the HOB, as well as to contemplate how one could justify legal persecution of homosexuals, yet exempt heterosexuals from any legal punishment for adultery or fornication.

Ramsey did not view homosexuality as an exceptionally grave sin, and many of his letters contained references to passages from the Bible that supported his views on the matter. In another letter from the difficult month of June, 1965, he wrote to Suzanne Goodhew, the wife of a Conservative MP, who had written a scathing letter to Ramsey over his support of the bill. He acknowledged her point that Christ had condemned sin, but he argued persuasively that Christ had not taken any special interest in the sinfulness

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[411] Ramsey, letter to Lady Brocket (10 June 1965) in the Ramsey Papers, v. 78, 149.

[412] Ibid.

of homosexuality, or in sexual sins at all. He again referred to the seventh chapter of the Gospel of St. Mark, in which are listed a "series of sins which Christ says defile a man":

> [C]learly his condemnation of all of them is severe, and so should ours be. When we look at the list of sins there given, one or two of them have to do with sex: but the rest have nothing to do with sex at all. It seems to me that an enlightened Christian morality does require that we avoid suggesting that sexual sins are necessarily more terrible than others because Christ does not suggest that. Equally, we need a well thought out principle as to which sins should be crimes and which should not.[413]

The task for Ramsey was to persuade other Christians that their distaste for "sexual immorality" should not override their obligations as Christians to treat others with dignity and equality under the law. Ramsey urged Goodhew to examine the reasoning behind the bill dispassionately, and to recognize the sincere Christian principles that motivated its sponsors among the Anglican episcopate: "These are serious questions for us to face, and I do not think the matter is dealt with fairly by suggesting that those who try to face these questions in a new way are 'condoning sin.'"[414]

In a letter to Lord Lambton, Ramsey defended his use of explicit language in his speech of 21 June in the Lords:

> On the main issue discussed on the initial motion, I took the line … that degrees of sinfulness turn upon personal circumstances, motives, etc., and that fornication can be no less sinful than homosexual acts. My argument went on that not all sins committed privately are given the status of crimes, and that a reasonable law puts homosexual acts between consenting adults on the same side of the law as fornication. I went on to argue, as also did others, that the present law does not help but rather hinders the combating of the evil concerned; the evidence for this view is, I think, considerable.
> … [T]here was an attempt to put back into the criminal category one particular kind of homosexual act distinguished from the rest. In my speech I resisted that on the ground that all kinds of homosexual intercourse are disgusting, and one really cannot make a moral distinction between them. All are equally abominable

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[413] Ramsey, letter to Suzanne Goodhew (30 June 1965) in the Ramsey Papers, v. 78, 175.

[414] Ibid.

> and it is arbitrary to select the one form as abominable in distinction from the rest. . . . I hold that fornication between persons of opposite sex can be morally as abominable as these other things.[415]

Ramsey sought to debate the issue on its merits, and his attempts at rigorous, serious analysis had been used against him. Ramsey remained proud of his involvement in the Lords, although he later wrote that the experience had been "undermining to morale" and caused him to become "a good deal more shy than I had been."[416] The enactment of the HOB in 1967 was one of the most notable legal reforms of the decade. Ramsey felt that he had been loyal to his own religious and moral principles, particularly his Incarnational concern for human dignity, despite attacks from some of his fellow peers. "I think the year made it clear," he wrote, "that I was a person who stood for certain things and was not a mere talker of platitudes."[417]

3. The Rhodesian Crisis

In the mid-1960s, the government's policy towards the white minority regime in Rhodesia was one of the dominant issues in British foreign policy. Since 1923, the colony had been self-governing under its own parliament and head of state. The dismantling of the British Empire after World War II impelled many white Rhodesians to call for complete independence from the British government, especially as the latter became increasingly critical of the undemocratic nature of the all-white Rhodesian regime. The population ratio of Rhodesia in 1964 was two-hundred-thousand whites to four million blacks.[418] Even the Tory governments of 1951 to 1964 had not invariably

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[415] Ramsey, letter to Lord Lambton (24 June 1965) in the Ramsey Papers, v. 78, 166-167.

[416] Ramsey, "1965," 137.

[417] Ibid., 138.

[418] Chadwick, 241.

supported the racist government and its repressive policies, despite considerable pro-Rhodesian sentiment among Conservative Party stalwarts such as the fifth Marquess of Salisbury. When the Labor Party won the 1964 General Election in Britain, the new Harold Wilson government was considerably less inclined to indulge the Rhodesian regime. Shortly after assuming office, Wilson made it plain that democratic reforms would be necessary in Rhodesia if the political and economic relationship between the two countries were to continue intact. Despite Wilson's demands, some in his government expressed fear of a Rhodesian declaration of independence, although many ministers did not believe that the Rhodesian leader Ian Smith would actually go that far in his defiance of Britain. On 11 November 1965, more than a year after the Labor government assumed office in Britain, Smith's government issued its Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI). The Wilson government retaliated by removing Rhodesia from the sterling area, withdrawing Commonwealth preferences for Rhodesian goods, banning exports of British oil to Rhodesia, and seizing the assets of the Rhodesian Reserve Bank in London. British warships also briefly attempted to blockade oil deliveries into Rhodesia.

Ramsey's involvement in the issue was complex. The relationship between the established Anglican Churches in England and Rhodesia was close, as even a cursory examination of Ramsey's correspondence during this period will confirm. Throughout most of 1964 and 1965, urgent letters passed with increasing frequency between Lambeth Palace and the Bishop of Matabeleland, Kenneth Skelton, in Rhodesia. Skelton had been the spiritual leader of Rhodesia's Anglicans for two years, and his deep distrust of the Smith regime only strengthened Ramsey's antipathy. In a letter written early in the

summer of 1965, when Smith's intentions were still unclear to most Britons, Skelton warned Ramsey that Smith sought to create a permanent apartheid state in Rhodesia.[419] "Suggestions I see in the British press that the British Government [is] hoping that it can trust Mr. Smith to proceed to majority rule after independence is granted fill me with alarm," Skelton wrote.[420] He added that the Smith government was busily disseminating "fanatical anti-communist propaganda" that he compared to "that put out by organizations such as the [American far-right organization] John Birch Society."[421] A few months later, Skelton wrote to Ramsey: "We are rapidly approaching a situation here where a fascist-type [government] is in existence: in fact, the parallels with Germany in the 1930s are too close for comfort. And there is virtually no white opposition."[422] Much of the episcopal hierarchy and rank-and-file clergy of the Rhodesian church were supportive of the government. One liberal Rhodesian Christian wrote to Ramsey's assistant, Robert Beloe, that only a handful of courageous figures (the Bishop of Matabeleland the most conspicuous among them) were willing to speak out in opposition to Smith and his policies.[423] Within days of Smith's announcement of UDI, "in a sermon in Salisbury Cathedral, the Anglican Bishop of the Diocese of Mashonaland, Cecil Alderson, denounced UDI as illegal. On 26 November, the Christian Council of Rhodesia, the umbrella organization for Protestant denominations in Rhodesia, did

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[419] Kenneth Skelton, letter to Michael Ramsey (5 July 1965) in the Ramsey Papers, v. 85, 182.

[420] Ibid.

[421] Ibid.

[422] Skelton, letter to Michael Ramsey (8 October 1965) in the Ramsey Papers, v. 85, 218-219, 218.

[423] John Kingsnorth, letter to Robert Beloe (30 September 1965) in the Ramsey Papers, v. 85, 198-200, 199.

likewise."[424] Two days later, the five Roman Catholic bishops in Rhodesia also condemned UDI, and focused particularly withering criticism on Smith's description of UDI as "a blow for the preservation of justice, civilization, and Christianity."[425] Although the reaction of Rhodesia's Christian leaders was significantly less accommodating towards Smith and his government than some of Ramsey's correspondents had maintained, there was overwhelming support for UDI among the white Rhodesian population.

That Ramsey was serving as the president of the British Council of Churches just as the Rhodesian crisis erupted further entangled him in the issue. His work with the council led Ramsey into what may have been the single most bitterly contested episode of his entire career. In his autobiographical essay "1965," written in 1980, Ramsey dealt extensively with his involvement in the public debate over Rhodesia. Of all the controversies of that year, Ramsey described the conflict over Rhodesia as "the fiercest of all troubles."[426] On 23 September 1965, the Council with Ramsey as chair passed a resolution including the following language:

> . . . if all attempts to persuade the Rhodesian Government . . . fail, and independence is illegally declared, Her Majesty's Government should, in full consultation with the United Nations, resume responsibility for government in Rhodesia. Even if this should require the use of force, the nation should have the wisdom and moral courage to take an action which is required by justice and compassion for all the people of Rhodesia.[427]

[424] Chengetai J. Zvobgo, "Church and State in Rhodesia: From the Unilateral Declaration of Independence to the Peace Commission, 1965-1972," *Journal of South African Studies*, 31 (2), June 2005, 381-402, 382, 383.

[425] Ibid., 382-383.

[426] Ramsey, "1965," 132.

[427] Resolution of the British Council of Churches (27-28 April 1965) in the Ramsey Papers, v. 85, 176.

Ramsey later wrote that "at the meeting of the BCC at Aberdeen I made the short speech saying that if the Government found it practicable it would be right to use force to protect the African majority against a rebellious move by Mr. Smith. It is indeed possible that a small show of force might have controlled the situation without bloodshed."[428] During this "most stormy of weeks," the archbishop turned characteristically to liberal catholic theology to calm his spirits and clarify his thinking on the issue. In this case, he studied H. Scott Holland's lectures on the Gospel of St. John.[429]

Massive press coverage awaited Ramsey when he returned to London from Aberdeen, most of it either hostile or skeptical about the archbishop's judgment. Immediately after his return to London, he appeared in the Lords, where several members of the chamber attacked him. He later wrote: "It was, I suppose, the most unpleasant day ever."[430] At a diocesan conference at Canterbury Cathedral a week after his controversial remarks, Ramsey decided to avoid any discussion of the Rhodesian crisis. Instead, he delivered a sermon on "the person of Jesus Christ and the reality of our relation to Him in our daily lives."[431] He wrote that during the following week, he was the object of "abuse" in the British press, and he was further depressed by the lack of support which he perceived from his fellow bishops: "Strangely I had no gestures of sympathy and support from the bishops and it left me wondering if they were vexed and embarrassed. The whole affair was very much a strain."[432] The experience traumatized Ramsey, and he

[428] Ramsey, "1965," 133.

[429] Ibid.

[430] Ibid., 134.

[431] Ibid.

[432] Ibid., 136.

believed that the episode had serious longterm consequences for the Labor government's policy towards the Smith regime. He asserted in his autobiographical essay that, after the public uproar that greeted Ramsey's remarks, Harold Wilson decided to avoid any public suggestion of military force in Rhodesia.[433]

When he came to write his memoirs of the experience, fifteen years had passed, but he remained bitter at his treatment and eager to justify his position: "Later . . . a number of politicians came to admit that there was sense in what I said and that a little force might have achieved much. There was irony in the idea that 'we cannot possibly have fighting in Rhodesia' when there followed years of agonized fighting before a solution was reached."[434] An evaluation of Ramsey's correspondence during the weeks after the BCC resolution revealed the extraordinary anger and bitterness that his position on the issue aroused among many Britons, particularly those who had family or military connections in Rhodesia. R. B. Houston of Wickford, Essex, wrote:

> As a Christian, a soldier, a graduate of your university, and the descendant of four generations of a family that served India from the time of the mutiny until after Independence, I am amazed . . . that you should advocate the use of force in Rhodesia, for any reason, let alone for the precise purpose of deliberately destroying a minority of your fellow countrymen.
> I never expected to hear such irresponsible ranting from even a deranged and turbulent prelate […] If you are a Christian, then I am not: if I am a Christian, then you are not. At any rate, I am certainly no longer a member of your Church which, apparently, is now in the hands of fools, asses, and prating coxcombs.[435]

One writer on behalf of the right-wing English Rights Association wrote to inform Ramsey that he and his organization did not "support your efforts to turn white people

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[433] Ibid., 138.

[434] Ibid., 137.

[435] R. B. Houston, letter to Michael Ramsey (26 October 1965) in the Ramsey Papers, v. 85, 249.

into cannon fodder," an accusation that appeared in several critical letters.[436] Another writer said simply: "Why don't you dye your skin black you filthy communist pig. You should be shot."[437] These were characteristic examples of the vitriol directed at the archbishop.

On 15 November 1965, Ramsey delivered an extensive and powerful analysis of the Rhodesian crisis in the House of Lords. He opened with a magnanimous acknowledgement of his opponents' sincerity over the "tragedy" of Rhodesia.[438] "We are very lacking in imagination if we do not have some understanding of the fears felt by some of the white people. . . . The Rhodesian crisis has brought to many people grief between friends, and grief between relatives, too," he observed. "[W]e cannot forget that among those on the other side in Rhodesia are people who, however mistaken we may think them, are God-fearing people who care for Christian values."[439] In spite of the furor that the issue aroused, Ramsey believed that few could dispute the terrible injustice that the black majority in Rhodesia had suffered, and would continue to suffer after UDI. He described the Rhodesian government as an "illegal regime," and although he had been one of the principal targets of pro-Smith outrage in Britain, he argued "that the people of this country, after some inevitable bewilderment, are grasping what these moral issues

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[436] D. Finney, letter to Michael Ramsey in the Ramsey Papers, v. 85, 251.

[437] C. H. Read, letter to Michael Ramsey in the Ramsey Papers, v. 85, 253.

[438] Ramsey, remarks in the House of Lords (15 November 1965), at http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/lords/1965/nov/15/southern-rhodesia.

[439] Ibid.

are."[440] For Ramsey, the moral principles at stake were self-evident to anyone who examined the matter dispassionately.

Ramsey condemned UDI on many different grounds. He emphasized that it lacked any "safeguarding" of the rights of black Rhodesians in education, politics, and freedom from racial discrimination. "It is in these matters that the obligation of this country lies," he said.[441] Ramsey believed that the moral crisis was so grave in the case of racial oppression in Rhodesia that Britain's very legitimacy as a global power and an ostensibly Christian nation were at stake:

> [N]ow that U.D.I. has happened, the issue for our country in the sight of the world, and not least in the sight of all the countries of Africa, is that our country should be seen to uphold law, order and justice with the same resolution everywhere, whatever be the race and colour of those in relation to whom law has to be upheld. Nothing could damage us more in the eyes of African countries—and, I would add, in the eyes of the God of justice and righteousness—than that we should even seem to falter in this duty and obligation.[442]

He considered the moral and humanitarian issues that sanctions raised. He argued that the British public did not fully understand the "aim and ethics of sanctions," which had the potential to inflict damage on the very people they were designed to aid.[443] "Gestures of protest may be right, but a mere gesture could damage people whom we least want to damage and could leave the final situation no better," he said. "Again, I do not believe in sanctions as a sort of punishment; and, in any case, they could, if prolonged, bring punishment to innocent people, Africans as well as white."[444] If this were to prove to be

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[440] Ibid.

[441] Ibid.

[442] Ibid.

[443] Ibid.

[444] Ibid.

the end result of sanctions, then they would have been counterproductive and only beneficial to Smith and his government. Ramsey asserted that the “sole justification” for sanctions was “to bring about the end of the illegal regime in Rhodesia. I would thus call sanctions not a moral gesture, nor a punishment, but an effective moral instrument to achieve a result.”[445] In advocating sanctions, he urged the Lords to ensure that their results were swiftly felt and effective, and the sanctions themselves were not imposed for an overly lengthy period, could have “embittering” consequences.[446] The reasoning here was a classic example of how Ramsey demonstrated the necessity of an analytical and nuanced approach to political questions.

On the question of whether military force was necessary, Ramsey referred to the then-recent controversy that had arisen over the BCC resolution. “As to possible action beyond economic sanctions,” he said, “my own view is known as to what I believe Christian conscience should say if the lamentable necessity arose.”[447] He commended the “sound moral principle” about race and decolonization which had guided the decision-making of the Wilson government, and added: “I do not believe that the Government could, without dishonour, be acting differently.”[448] He noted that the government’s decisions had to balance effective sanctions against Rhodesia with the possibility of alienating the people or interfering with the economies of its neighbours, which could provoke unforeseen violence on the African continent. He concluded:

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[445] Ibid.

[446] Ibid.

[447] Ibid.

[448] Ibid.

> My Lords, no Government could have a harder task than ours at this time: the task of steering between these two dangers and of being resolutely firm, yet looking for a law and order which must, in the end, go with reconciliation and with changes in outlook. . . . I believe that the Government at this moment and on this issue deserve the support of all our citizens; if there are differences as to what particular sanctions are likely to achieve, no doubt these differences must be debated, but we can all surely hope . . . that these differences will not prevent all our leaders from being at one in stating clearly, and upholding, the moral duty of our country. There are at stake not only the future of Rhodesia and the future of much else beside, but also the honour of this country.[449]

In spite of the considerable negative publicity which his stance had attracted, Ramsey's commitment to his social theological principles during the episode had been unassailable. He fulfilled the episcopal obligations which he described in his charges to ordinands. He had asserted the Church's commitment to the human rights of black Rhodesians, and had attempted to influence government policy against the Smith regime.

4. "Keep Britain White": The Immigration Debate

Immigration first emerged as a major issue in British politics in the 1950s. As the British Empire disintegrated after the Second World War, the British government granted Commonwealth citizens full status as British subjects, free to enter and work in Britain without any legal restrictions. Serious labor shortages provided consistent employment for the many Commonwealth immigrants who moved to Britain under the Attlee and second Churchill governments. Initially, the vast majority of immigrants came from the West Indies, but many also came from India, Pakistan, Africa, and white Commonwealth nations such as Australia and Canada. Immigrants of color were, however, the main targets of anti-immigration rhetoric, despite the demonstrably positive contributions they made to the British economy. Many immigrant physicians took positions with the newly

[449] Ibid.

formed National Health Service, and so prevalent were immigrants in the transportation industry that the image of the West Indian bus driver developed into a cultural stereotype in the 1950s.

Before the mid-1960s, the responses that the political parties offered to the problems posed by large-scale immigration were complicated. The period between 1945 and 1958 has been portrayed in almost idealistic terms, despite the creation in 1955 of a government committee to consider "urgent action" on the issue.[450] The Eden government in particular was eager to avoid causing offense to Commonwealth governments, whose support was thought to be vital to Britain's continued superpower status in relation to the United States and the Soviet Union.[451] Many aging Tory imperialists retained a strong sense of paternalism towards their former subjects, while many liberal-minded politicians in both the Conservative and Labor parties opposed any sort of discrimination based upon race. The issue occasioned much discussion but virtually no legislative action until 1961, when 113,000 immigrants entered Britain from the West Indies, India, and Pakistan.[452] By this time, even Labor MPs were in favor of immigration controls, due largely to the widespread resentment that their working-class constituents felt against their immigrant neighbors. Most of the immigrants moved into poor working class neighborhoods, with the largest populations concentrated in London and in the declining industrial cities of the West Midlands. In the late summer of 1958, the Notting Hill riots demonstrated the potential for racial conflict in urban areas with large immigrant populations.

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[450] D. W. Dean, "Conservative Governments and the Restriction of Commonwealth Immigration in the 1950s: The Problem of Constraint," *The Historical Journal*, 35 (I), 1992, 171-194, 172.

[451] Ibid., 174-175.

[452] Arthur Marwick, *British Society Since 1945* (London: Penguin, 1982), 163-164.

By 1959, immigration was enough of a political concern that Oswald Mosley, the notorious British fascist leader of the 1930s, attempted to resurrect his political career by launching a parliamentary campaign based upon opposition to immigration. The working classes were often the most vociferous in their opposition to immigration, and Mosley attempted to exploit this resentment in his political campaigns of the late 1950s. Many Britons felt that their political leaders did not listen to their concerns, or that politicians were apt to dismiss their complaints as embarrassing outpourings of white racism.[453] Skidelsky wrote that the "pro-immigration lobby united economic liberals inside and outside the Government who regarded national frontiers as archaic to economic integration with internationalists who regarded them as obstacles to the brotherhood of man."[454] Skidelsky also argued that Labor, by initially supporting virtually unlimited immigration from the Commonwealth, was unwittingly supporting what he described as the "most predatory forces of modern capitalism."[455] The conflicts within the Labor Party over immigrants' rights contributed to the inability of the British political establishment to resolve the issue in 1960s and 1970s.

In the 1960s, in response to growing public concern, both Conservative and Labor governments passed legislation that slowed the influx of Commonwealth immigrants. The Commonwealth Immigrants Act (CIA) of 1962 allowed UK passport holders to retain their citizenship, but rescinded their automatic right of entry into Britain. In 1968, Parliament passed another act of the same title, which restricted the right of entry solely

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[453] Robert Skidelsky, *Oswald Mosley* (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston: 1975), 505.

[454] Ibid., 506.

[455] Ibid., 508.

to those who held British rather than UK passports. By that time, Ramsey had begun to make detailed speeches on the topic in the Lords. De-la-Noy wrote that Ramsey "became involved with matters concerned with immigration long before it was fashionable to adopt a moral stance on race."[456] He was the chairman of the National Committee for Commonwealth Immigrants (NCCI) in 1967 when the Labor government introduced the Commonwealth Immigrants Bill. There was considerable media coverage when the archbishop met with the Home Secretary, James Callaghan, to expound his criticisms of the bill, which he spoke against in the Lords on 29 February 1968. As Ramsey became more outspoken on behalf of immigrants in Britain, he received the typical flood of vituperative correspondence from opponents of immigration, a portion of the population that transcended partisan identification. He also encountered hostile immigration opponents during his public appearances. In December, 1968, for example, he preached at the parish of St. Martin's in Basildon, Essex, where members of the right-wing National Front shouted him down and called him a "traitor" and a "villain."[457]

The archbishop differed from his opponents on immigration partly because he believed that certain anti-immigration activists were inflating projected immigration figures, and partly because he believed that, no matter how carefully immigration opponents chose their words, white racism motivated much of the furor on the issue. In many of his letters on the topic, Ramsey placed race at the center of his arguments. He wrote to one opponent of immigration that "there is, alas, a lot of deep and bitter color prejudice in this country," and though he acknowledged the validity of some white

[456] De-la-Noy, 175.

[457] *Daily Telegraph* article clipping (10 December 1968) entitled "'Traitor' shouted at Dr. Ramsey," in the Ramsey Papers, v. 141, 254.

Britons' complaints, he added that "there are also a great many people without experience of practical difficulties [due to immigration] who are animated by a crude dislike of the idea of people of another race and color being their fellow citizens."[458] In the wake of events such as the Notting Hill riots, Ramsey reluctantly concluded that restrictions on immigration were necessary in the interest of community relations. But he argued that those who supported repatriation—and polls in the late 1960s and early 1970s indicated that well over half of the British population did so—and other more stringent measures such as banning the entry of dependents would be imposing laws upon immigrants that were both "very wrong" and "inhumane."[459] To one correspondent, he wrote that the violent language of many immigration opponents caused "deep hurt and bitterness" in society, which could be at least as noxious to community relations as immigration itself.[460]

In another letter, Ramsey wrote that while God had created different races to inhabit different areas of the world, he believed that "history has shown that these different races are not meant to be separate but are meant to give service to one another."[461] The early history of Christianity, with its extensive missionary activities throughout the Mediterranean, disproved suggestions that God had desired racial separation as his correspondent had implied. Ramsey wrote that "Christ told his disciples to carry the Christian faith to every part of the world, and that meant men from the races and countries originally Christian being missionaries to other races and carrying with

[458] Ramsey, letter to Douglas Fermedy (14 May 1968) in the Ramsey Papers, v. 130, 258.

[459] Ramsey, letter to M. H. Godfrey (26 November 1968) in the Ramsey Papers, v. 130, 304.

[460] Ramsey, letter to A. G. Watts (25 November 1968) in the Ramsey Papers, v. 130, 302.

[461] Ramsey, letter to Victor Stanford (26 April 1968) in the Ramsey Papers, v. 130, 250.

them certain kinds of culture as well as religious teaching. In these ways the races have got involved with one another through the course of history."[462] Ramsey had little patience for anyone who attempted to use Christianity to support repressive or unjust causes. Immigration opponents were prone to talking of "defending British culture" and "Christian values" in their calls for stringent restrictions on immigration and repatriation, but Ramsey rejected their belief that immigration endangered the nation's cultural or religious traditions. He wrote that Christians "do not know quite how far God wants them to intermingle, but we do know that it must be the will of God for them to treat one another with honor, respect, and justice and as Christians to live in Christian brotherhood."[463]

In his correspondence on immigration, Ramsey often contextualized the resentments of white Britons within the very recent history of the British Empire, which he observed had laid the groundwork for Commonwealth immigration:

> The White races are historically involved with the Black races, partly through the terrible history of slavery and deportation in the slave trade and partly (on the other side) through the greatly beneficent participation of many White people amongst African populations. A good deal of involvement having historically taken place it cannot be reversed. Both the main political parties in this country desire restriction of the entry of immigrants and I would certainly accept that.[464]

As we have seen, Ramsey criticized religious reactionaries whose "fear of the secular world" led them to take positions on social issues that had deleterious real-world consequences for those affected by outdated laws. The inevitability of social and cultural change was a familiar theme in Ramsey's speeches and writings during this period,

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[462] Ibid.

[463] Ibid.

[464] Ramsey, letter to A. G. Watts.

although he was critical of many of these changes himself (such as, for example, abortion and rising divorce rates). He would not allow immigration opponents to avoid the issue of British responsibility in the creation of the immigration problem, especially given the extent of British imperialism in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. To one immigration opponent, he wrote: "[I]t can only make for great bitterness if members of families are not allowed to join one another, and if the call for repatriation is voiced in such terms as to cause deep resentment. There are Commonwealth citizens of colored races now living and working in this country in the second generation, knowing no other country, and in many cases contributing valuably to our economy."[465] His rhetoric emphasized the overriding importance of the Christian principles of tolerance and mutual respect rather than legal or social persecution for those whose presence in society augured the emergence of the diverse, multicultural Britain of last quarter of the twentieth century. On the many political issues of a controversial nature on which Ramsey commented, he exhorted Christians to support positions that would improve the lives of other human beings in British society, and to overcome moral or racial resentments.

Immigration was the dominant issue in British politics in 1968, as the prospect of mass immigrantion from Kenya stoked racial and social hostility among a large proportion of the British population. A crisis over the status of Kenyan Asians led to what one historian has described as a "betrayal of commitments made and pledges given only a few years earlier."[466] Kenyan Asians were being driven from their homeland by

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[465] Ibid.

[466] Randall Hansen, "The Kenyan Asians, British Politics, and the Commonwealth Immigrants Act, 1968," *The Historical Journal*, 42 (3), 1999, 809-834, 809. "Those supporting the government retorted that no enforceable pledge had been made . . ., and that the Labor government was both entitled and obliged to restrict the flow of Asians entering the UK with British passports," Hansen wrote. "It was entitled because

the "Africanization" policy of the Kenyan government. The charge of betrayal centered around the question of whether the Conservative government of Harold Macmillan had, in 1963, permanently exempted Kenyan Asians from the immigration controls enacted in the CIA of 1962. Opponents of the CIA of 1968 claimed that the Macmillan government had made assurances to the Asian population when Kenya became independent. The move to limit the right of entry indicated the shift in the Labor Party's attitude towards immigration. The main target of liberal criticism was Callaghan, whose hard line on immigration markedly departed from the approach of his predecessor as Home Secretary, Roy Jenkins. Ramsey himself even questioned Callaghan's motivations in the Lords, something he rarely did in regard to opponents. He spoke movingly of the betrayal inherent in the second immigration bill. But despite the bill's critics, there was little doubt that the majority of the working and middle classes supported Callaghan's actions.

On 14 June 1968, at the height of political tension over immigration, Ramsey delivered a speech to the Commonwealth Correspondents Association. He described his "love" for the Commonwealth, which was based in part on the "idea of the Commonwealth as a society of nations of many different races."[467] He sought to bolster support for immigrants' rights, using rational argument to cut through the "emotional passions" that characterized discussion of the issue.[468] He asserted that Britons needed to "study the question [of race relations] . . . in a scientific way with an accurate analysis of

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no government can bind its successors, and because the overwhelming majority of the British public demanded restrictions on Asian entry."

[467] Ramsey, "Address to the Commonwealth Correspondents Association" (14 June 1968) in the Ramsey Papers, v. 141, pp. 206-212, 206.

[468] Ibid., 207.

the facts."[469] He charged that claims in the media that the immigrant population would overwhelm the native white population by the year 2000 were wildly exaggerated. Ramsey viewed the issue not so much as a question of whether the immigration of people of color would be harmful to British society, but rather whether the unwillingness of many native Britons to welcome Commonwealth immigrants would be harmful. "Christianity stands for the equal rights of all races and their equal duty and privilege of mutual respect and service," he said.[470] His words took on a distinctly Incarnational tone:

> Laws cannot eradicate prejudice and alter human attitudes, but they can only aid the process. Good community relations require tolerance, a sense of justice, and a deep respect for persons. One who is like myself a Christian puts the greatest emphasis upon the truth that every man and woman is created in God's own image, and it is for us to reverence that image wherever we see it.[471]

This was as succinct a summation of Maurician social theology as Ramsey articulated in any of his public utterances. The archbishop drew upon his scholarship in theology and Church history to espouse forms of social interaction and lawmaking that reflected his liberal Christian "reverence" for a human race that he believed had been sanctified by the Incarnation.

In the Lords, Ramsey delivered two speeches during 1968 on the Commonwealth Immigrants Bill. During an exceptionally bitter debate on 29 February 1968, he prefaced his remarks by promising that he would not "try to raise the temperature" of the debate, but rather would "inject into my remarks some constructive suggestions."[472] He referred

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[469] Ibid.

[470] Ibid., 210.

[471] Ibid.

[472] Ramsey, remarks in the House of Lords (29 February 1968), at http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/lords/1968/feb/29/commonwealth-immigrants-bill-1.

to his work as the chairman of the NCCI, which employed more than thirty workers to facilitate the "the building up of good community relations in the towns and cities where tensions exist and where tensions are threatened."[473] The organization was particularly active in helping immigrants in the areas of education and housing. In another comment that revealed his self-image as an educator, he observed that much of the work of organizations such as the NCCI was "the education of public opinion on both sides. This means helping immigrants from other countries to understand the ways and customs in the United Kingdom which are unfamiliar to them, and also helping our own English born citizens to understand the ways, the cultures, and the backgrounds of those who come from other parts of the world."[474] The goal of this educational process was to create an environment in which Britons would recognize the human dignity of immigrants, who would be encouraged to assimilate and contribute to society (he warned against the creation of ghettoes in large urban areas).

As one with a special interest in community relations, Ramsey argued against one of the controversial aspects of the immigration bill: the blatantly disingenuous categorization of United Kingdom citizens based upon geography. The archbishop pointed out that immigrants and residents throughout the Commonwealth perceived it as an underhanded means by which to limit access to citizens of color while giving preference to white immigrants. Specifically, a clause in the bill was clearly intended to impede the arrival of Asian immigrants from Kenya. By inserting this into the bill, the British government had undermined perceptions of its good faith on immigration

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[473] Ibid.

[474] Ibid.

issues—a problem that Ramsey claimed adversely affected community relations for immigrants who had already settled in the UK.[475]

As was his wont, Ramsey insisted on taking what he called the "human reality" of the bill into consideration. Kenyan Asians would be denied the right to move to and settle in the UK despite their technical status as British citizens. This dilemma was not problematic for a Canadian who lost the right to immigrate to Britain, because that person still would have Canadian citizenship. However, the British government had assured Kenyan Asians in 1963 that they would not be subject to the immigration quotas of the first CIA, and thus they hoped that their British citizenship would enable them to relocate and earn a living now that the Kenyan government was actively working against them. Were the bill to be enacted, Ramsey claimed, "it virtually means the breaking of this country's word. In saying that last thing, I am not meaning that particular statesmen made promises and broke them. No. What we are saying is that the country, by its total action, involved itself in a certain obligation, and that this Bill abrogates that obligation."[476] He asserted that the introduction and likely passage of the bill had already inflicted serious damage on community relations in those areas of Britain with large immigrant populations, and he urged the government to remove the controversial clause.

In remarks that betrayed his suspicion that much (if not most) of the furor aroused by Commonwealth immigration was rooted in white racism, he commented:

> I agree wholeheartedly with the noble Lord, Lord Wade, that there is a great deal that can be done in this country, more widely than this country, and in connection with other Commonwealth countries, again, in grappling with this problem. Indeed, in discussion with other Commonwealth countries it might be seen how

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[475] Ibid.

[476] Ibid.

> the very great skills of Asians at present in Kenya might be used, some in this country, some in other countries—not as a kind of problem, as a service, but as human beings with something scientific to contribute to the lives of particular communities, if those communities would shed their particular racial prejudices, whatever they are, and enjoy their help.[477]

Many of the themes of Ramsey's social theological writings were present in these comments. As we have seen, he was not a utopian dreamer when it came to social or political questions; his work with organizations such as the NCCI demonstrated his willingness to become involved with the pragmatic aspects of community relations. He sought the creation of a tolerant society not by a passive process, but one that demanded active mutual engagement between human beings.

Ramsey criticized the government for its lack of consultation with the NCCI during the drafting of the bill: "I thought that the non-consultation with the National Committee—I do not mean with myself, but with the very skilled persons who are its workers at many levels—very odd."[478] Having made this observation, he was careful not to impugn the good faith of the government. He noted that the passage of the bill in the Commons had been accompanied by "a very sepulchral silence."[479] "Why this unease?" he asked. "It really is an unease, and I believe that it is an unease we all share. We all find this vast human problem too much for us, and there can be no sort of 'more righteous than thou' attitude in any single one of us on this matter."[480] In writings such as *Sacred and Secular*, Ramsey had exhorted Christian readers to appeal to the consciences (or

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[477] Ibid.

[478] Ibid.

[479] Ibid.

[480] Ibid.

"prick the heart") of opponents in religious or political debates. This was his approach in his speeches on immigration

On 15 July 1968, the archbishop delivered another major address to the Lords on the immigration bill. While repeating some of the themes from his remarks in February, on this occasion he pondered the racial aspect of the immigration controversy at length. "Centuries hence," he remarked, "our successors may be astonished at this phase in human history, that there was so much troubled arid discussion about the colour of human skin. If one looks at the matter in that way, it is altogether astonishing. Why should the colour of human skin be such a tremendous issue, any more than the difference between blue eyes and brown eyes and grey eyes, or between the different colours of hair?"[481] As he had in his previous address on the bill, Ramsey confronted the delicate issue of whether racism (or "racialism") was at the root of community relations problems in Britain. He believed that it was, although he acknowledged that there were serious problems inherent in the formation of large immigrant communities in a mostly foreign society:

> But we know that it is not just the colour of skin; it is the colour problem intermingled with a legion of other problems concerning culture and ways of life, and whether people have always lived in a place or are new arrivals. A whole tangle of social and economic problems develops, and, as well as the frank colour prejudice which certainly exists, there are the prejudicial troubles caused when colour becomes a symbol for things more complex than itself. That, I believe, is part of our contemporary tragedy in this country.[482]

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[481] Ramsey, remarks in the House of Lords (15 July 1968), at http://hansard.millbanksystems.com/lords/1968/jul/15/race-relations-bill.

[482] Ibid.

His insistence that racism was a major problem among native Britons infuriated many immigration opponents, who typically insisted that they based their hostility towards Commonwealth immigrants upon concern for social stability.

Ramsey defined community relations as "equal opportunity accompanied by cultural diversity in an atmosphere of tolerance," an ideal that called for a "delicate balance between the readiness of newcomers in any community to adapt themselves to that community and the readiness of those already in the community to accept differences of outlook and to be very sympathetic and tolerant."[483] He contrasted the efforts of organizations such as the NCCI with the work of anti-immigration and -immigrant bodies such as the National Front, which, he asserted, "exist for the purpose of protesting and making a noise about grievances to groups of white citizens."[484] He acknowledged the efforts of some well-meaning white Britons who were "trying very hard to do good but being rather paternalistic and sometimes rather surprised when they do not quite meet the feelings of immigrant communities or communities of people of other races."[485] The NCCI offered training on the cultures of diverse Commonwealth immigrant groups to those who worked in education, social work, and law enforcement. It also helped to educate newly arrived immigrants about British society and culture.

Ramsey observed that the NCCI, which relied heavily on government subsidies, would soon transform into a new organization named the Community Relations Commission, which would also have a new chairman in place of the archbishop. (In an

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[483] Ibid.

[484] Ibid.

[485] Ibid.

uncharacteristic moment of self-regard, Ramsey claimed that the new organization would find it impossible to replace him as chairman with someone "who cares more about these matters than I do—because one will not be found.")[486] The improvement of community relations was a complex process that demanded serious engagement among community members and civil authorities, and "the best work is, I believe, done when you get a group of citizens, including persons of different races, working together in a common understanding, realising that the problems are common to both of them and doing their best to help with them in practical ways."[487] In Ramsey's estimation, the work of organizations such as the NCCI was underappreciated, even by a Labor government that was facing a serious political and social crisis over immigration.

Ramsey asserted that the ramifications of Britain's immigration policies needed to be understood in a global context:

> My Lords, it is not only a matter of how in this country we can get the most just and peaceful arrangements for our own community. It is also a matter of what contribution this country can be making to what indeed is a world crisis. Race relations are a crisis in the world: whether in the world as a whole there is to be racial conflict or racial harmony. And what happens in any one country can have immense effects for good or for ill upon other countries—far more than we commonly realise. I believe that the help which this Bill gives to the building up of good community relations in this country will be a contribution which our country can make to racial harmony in the world at large.[488]

Ramsey's appeal echoed Maurice's work in the 1840s to facilitate mutual understanding between the working classes and the middle classes. Ramsey may not have been conscious of that; he never mentioned Maurice in the Lords. Nonetheless, they shared a

[486] Ibid.

[487] Ibid.

[488] Ibid.

belief that the Kingdom of Christ could be actualized through painstaking and rational interaction, and that this process could be positive and transformative even when it might appear to end in failure.

A few months after his first address on immigration in the House of Lords, Ramsey encountered a prominent High Anglican politician who employed religious rhetoric that was starkly opposed to liberal Anglican social theology. Enoch Powell (1912-1998), the Conservative MP for Wolverhampton, was the most outspoken and popular anti-immigration spokesman on the British right. He quickly emerged as Ramsey's *bête noire* in the immigration debate. Born into a lower-middle-class family, Powell had demonstrated remarkable intellectual gifts at an early age. In 1933, he earned an extremely rare Double Starred First in classics at Trinity College, Cambridge, where he became a passionate Nietzschean and studied under the great classical scholar and poet, A. E. Housman. Housman's *A Shropshire Lad* was a major influence on Powell's own poetry, of which he published three volumes between 1937 and 1951. Powell taught classics at Cambridge and then in Australia before the outbreak of World War II, in which he served with distinction. He was elected to Parliament in 1950, serving Wolverhampton until early 1974. After a few months out of elective office, Powell returned to Parliament in late 1974 as the MP for a Northern Irish Ulster Unionist constituency, a position he retained until he lost his re-election bid and retired from politics in 1987. Before he attained political notoriety in the 1960s with his attacks on liberal immigration policies, he was best known for his free-market economic ideas and for having joined the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Peter Thorneycroft, in resigning from Macmillan's cabinet over a relatively small issue in the 1958 budget.

By 1967, Powell had begun to deliver speeches on immigration, which had become a contentious issue in his own parliamentary constituency. On 20 April 1968, he spoke on immigration at a Tory gathering in Birmingham, warning of violence and (quoting Virgil) "rivers of blood" in Britain's future. To prevent this, he called for a halt to immigration and for voluntary repatriation for Commonwealth immigrants who were already living in Britain. The "rivers of blood speech" became an immediate *cause célèbre*. Edward Heath, the leader of the Conservative Party in the Commons, fired Powell from his position as Shadow Minister of Defense, and even conservative Tories distanced themselves from Powell's extreme rhetoric. Nonethess, the public response to Powell's speech was overwhelmingly positive. Some polls registered 74 percent public approval for Powell's attacks on immigration.[489] In the fortnight following his speech, Powell received more than 100,000 letters from his fellow Britons, nearly all of which expressed support for him. When Ramsey publicly criticized Powell's speeches and policy proposals, he was opposing a man who had become, within only a few weeks, the most popular politician in Britain.

Powell was equally well known as an ascetic and pious High Church Anglican layman. After having been a militant atheist in the 1930s, he had had a conversion experience in 1949 that quickly led to his confirmation in the Church of England, an institution towards which he expressed reverence even when he bitterly attacked its clerical leaders. He wrote prolifically on Anglican topics and was a frequent lay preacher in Anglican parishes. As Ramsey and Powell skirmished over Commonwealth immigration policy, they reflected two disparate forms of Anglican High

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[489] John Campbell, *Edward Heath* (London: Pimlico, 1993), 244.

Churchmanship—one rooted in the Incarnational tradition of Maurice and Gore, the other in the hierarchical and institutional tradition of the pre-Tractarian High Church tradition. Like Ramsey, Powell was an Anglo-Catholic who felt little affinity for the Oxford Movement. The intensity of his identification with the Church of England was such that he would occasionally correct interviewers who described him as "Christian" by calling himself instead simply an "Anglican."[490] However, Powell was not a theologically orthodox Christian and thus did not share the theological assumptions that had motivated early nineteenth-century High Churchmen. Late in his life, he would offend many Christians by implying in an interview that he did not believe that Jesus Christ had ever existed.[491] Powell's private disbelief in the supernatural was not widely known in 1968, and Ramsey was certainly unaware of it. In his responses to Powell, Ramsey drew upon the tradition of Anglican social thought derived largely from the Sermon on the Mount, as did many of Powell's other opponents within the Anglican clergy. If their goal was to persuade Powell by appealing to his religious conscience, their efforts were an exercise in futility. Powell did not believe that the teachings of Christ were relevant to politics in the late twentieth century, nor did he have any interest in the social implications of the Incarnation or the Sermon on the Mount.

Powell may have continued to be an atheist even after his conversion to Anglicanism, which for him was more of a form of English nationalism than a religious faith.[492] The "throne and altar" Tory Anglicanism of the "High and Dries" (as pre-

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[490] Simon Heffer, *Like the Roman: The Life of Enoch Powell* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1998), 134-137.

[491] Ibid.

[492] Ibid.

Tractarian High Churchmen were called in the 1820s and 1830s) was much closer to Powell's religious ideology than was Tractarianism, with its erastianism, Romanizing tendencies, and intense supernaturalism. Peter Nockles' groundbreaking research into pre-Tractarian High Churchmanship has emphasized its "invariably Tory" politics, although he qualified this description by describing this Toryism as "by no means always in a narrowly political party sense," a qualification that applied to Powell as well.[493] Powell was committed to the Anglican establishment, in contrast to Ramsey, and was suspicious of an "otherworldly" approach to political problems, positions he shared with the pre-Tractarians.[494] Powell's nationalistic Toryism posited the established Church of England, along with the monarchy and the Houses of Parliament, as one of the foundations of a distinctly English identity. The steady increase in the Commonwealth immigrant population was a threat to the preservation of this identity in Powell's mind, although he typically justified his opposition to immigration by expressing concern over the potential for violence and social discord rather than as nationalism.

The religious aspect of the Ramsey and Powell conflict was a frequent topic in press coverage of the immigration bill in 1968. In the Ramsey Papers at Lambeth Palace are many newspapers articles; presumably, Whitworth preserved them. In some cases, Whitworth or Archbishop Ramsey himself annotated the articles. Two articles dated 2 December 1968 contained extensive comments by Powell on immigration and Christianity. The first, published in the *Daily Express,* informed readers that Powell "last night accused the Archbishop of Canterbury and other critics of his race speeches of

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[493] Peter Nockles, *The Oxford Movement in Context, 1760-1857* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 26.

[494] Ibid., 25-26; see also pp. 44-103 for a detailed analysis of pre-Tractarian High Church politics.

living ‘on the other side of a comprehension gap.’”[495] “I don’t account for the condemnation of my speeches on religious grounds,” Powell said in the article. “I think the reaction of the writers and speakers, including Church speakers, has shown a staggering gap in what is known by millions in certain areas.”[496] He had taken upon himself the responsibility of enlightening the prelates.

The second article (headlined “‘Bishops of out of touch’—Powell”) included further sharp words from Powell, who emphasized that he did not believe that Christianity, a religion, could be the basis of political policy in a late twentieth-century democratic state:

> Mr. Powell said that he respected the views of people who said there should be no national barriers, no customs, and that all men are equal in Christ. “But I cannot see that we should say that of domestic laws of which Christ knows nothing.” He said that in this case, you were dealing with a world where bread meant the body and wine meant the blood and you loved your neighbor as yourself. “The commands of Christ are supernatural and unfulfilled in this world. I don’t see how you can deduce an immigrant policy from it. I don’t see how you can conduct the affairs of a nation from it” . . .
> “I have got to bring home to the archiepiscopal and episcopal palaces the facts that are known in Wolverhampton, Bradford, and Birmingham of what the future holds.”[497]

Powell placed the idiosyncrasies and intellectualism of his own Christianity on display in the article. His impatience with the bishops’ exhortations for altruism towards immigrants was a constant theme in his interviews during this period. He attacked the bishops as smug, insular liberals who were out of touch with the concerns of common Britons, although he himself was a hyperintellectual classical scholar who had spent his

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[495] *Daily Express* article clipping (2 December 1968) in the Ramsey Papers, v. 141, 237.

[496] Ibid.

[497] *Guardian* article (2 December 1968) in the Ramsey Papers, v. 141, 238.

entire adult life in academia or in institutions such as the House of Commons. His disdain for liberal Christian social mores was unabashed. Powell dismissed the teachings of Christ as unreasonable and even mildly ridiculous, and his comment that "Christ knows nothing" of domestic lawmaking in modern Britain must have struck many Christian readers as a strange formulation in view of his own extravagant public piety. Despite his unusual views about what Ramsey called "Christian sociology," Powell still attracted a small following among the Anglican episcopate, including figures such as Bishop Sherard Falkner Allison of Winchester, who was giving anti-immigration speeches in the House of Lords as late as 1971.

In 1972, four years after the height of the immigration debate, events forced the archbishop to take a position on the predicament of thousands of Ugandan Asian immigrants who were entering the United Kingdom after being expelled from their home country by Idi Amin, its dictator. In the course of his frequent world travels, Ramsey had visited Uganda in 1970, when Milton Obote had been dictator. The occasion had been tense and uncomfortable. The archbishop had visited South Africa before he arrived in Uganda; despite his outspoken criticisms of apartheid and the Vorster regime, many Ugandans accused him of being favorable to apartheid and an ardent imperialist.[498] The criticisms befuddled Ramsey.

In August 1972, Douglas Tilbe, the director of the Community and Race Relations Unit of the British Council of Churches, prepared a private memorandum on the Ugandan situation for the Archbishop of Canterbury. Large numbers of Punjabi Indians had first moved to Uganda in the 1840s, when they were encouraged by the

[498] Chadwick, 266.

British to help build the Ugandan Railway; middle-caste Gujerati merchants had also settled in Uganda and helped to establish trade there. The director noted that Ugandan Asians had dominated as much as ninety percent of retail trade in the nation, and that had created deep resentment among Ugandan Africans.[499] After the country had attained independence in October of 1962, persecution of the Indian population in Uganda had intensified, but the situation had taken on ominous overtones after Amin took power in 1971. On 4 August 1972, Amin delivered a speech in which he announced: "I am going to ask Britain to take over responsibility for all Asians in Uganda who are holding British passports because they are sabotaging the economy of the country."[500] He ordered all Ugandan Asians to leave the country within ninety days, with the exception of physicians, dentists, lawyers, and selected other professionals whose services were needed were they to choose to stay.[501] Tilbe identified the crisis as a by-product of British imperialism.

Ugandan Asians were applying for entry into Britain on the basis of their status as British passport holders. At the time of the crisis in the late summer and fall of 1972, an estimated 50,000 Ugandan Asians held British passports. However, legal reforms such as the Commonwealth Immigrants Acts of the 1960s limited access from Uganda to 1,500 passport holders. There was massive coverage of the issue in the British media, which circulated wildly exaggerated estimates of the number of immigrants who appeared to be coming to Britain. Opponents of immigration had to concede that at least 1,500 Ugandan

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[499] Douglas Tilbe, "Ugandan Asians: A Background Paper," unpublished document in the Ramsey Papers, v. 243, 116-117, 116.

[500] Ibid., 117.

[501] Ibid.

Asians were legally entitled to enter and settle in Britain, even after the passage of increasingly draconian legislation between 1962 and 1971. The prospect loomed that tens of thousands of others would be denied entry during what was rapidly turning into a humanitarian crisis. In the weeks after Amin's announcement, reports circulated of widespread violence against Ugandan Asians. Decades of social resentment erupted, and Amin's government made no pretense of protecting the beleaguered Asian minority.

Chadwick wrote of the debate over Ugandan Asian immigrants that "Ramsey was strong that this [allowing those who were expelled to enter Britain] was a moral obligation," but a document in the Ramsey Papers indicates that some members of Ramsey's staff were uncomfortable with his prolonged silence on the issue in the weeks after Amin's expulsion announcement.[502] In a document dated 30 August 1972, more than three weeks after the crisis began, Hugh Whitworth urged the archbishop to make some kind of public pronouncement in support of the Ugandan Asians. "After a good deal of consideration," he wrote, "I feel that it will be difficult, and perhaps inappropriate, for you to stand aside and remain silent about this."[503] Neither Chadwick nor De-la-Noy referred to this uncharacteristic reticence on Ramsey's part. In an important passage, Whitworth cited Ramsey's own writings to persuade Ramsey to take public action:

> Moreover, you have already said publicly in your Cambridge Lecture: "We need to avoid a selective mentality in our moral judgments generally. . . . [T]here are African countries where tribal majorities are unjust to tribal minorities and where killing and suffering have had appalling dimensions." [You should] say briefly something to the effect that of course racialism is racialism, whoever does it, but our first duty, as Christians, on this occasion is for all of us to extend a welcoming hand to the displaced Asians who are coming here. I think this sort of statement

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[502] Ibid., 268.

[503] Hugh Whitworth, letter to Michael Ramsey (30 August 1972) in the Ramsey Papers, v. 243, 146-147, 146.

> might be an encouragement to clergy and others who are resisting Powellite pressures up and down the country.

Whitworth's familiarity with Ramsey's writings indicated an awareness among the archiepiscopal staff that the archbishop tried to implement in his actions the principles he articulated in his theological works.

Ramsey's fellow Primate and soon-to-be successor, Archbishop Donald Coggan of York, had been quite outspoken in favor of allowing the displaced Ugandan Asians to enter Britain, as had many other Anglican bishops. On the same day that Whitworth wrote his memorandum to Ramsey, Coggan published a letter in the *Times* of London in which he wrote that the "British government is to be congratulated on the willingness it has shown to accept its responsibilities for these victims of General Amin's miserable display of racialism."[504] He acknowledged that the influx of immigrants from Uganda created the potential to strain community relations in areas that already possessed large immigrant populations, but he expressed the hope that "Christians and people of good-will will . . . do all they can to create a favorable climate of opinion towards these unfortunate people."[505] Ramsey's silence on the issue became more conspicuous as his episcopal peers spoke out. Soon after Whitworth's memorandum, Ramsey decided to make a statement in support of the right of Ugandan Asians to enter Britain. On 4 September 1972, he released a statement in which he commended the British government's "courageous honoring of our obligations to Asians in Uganda who have

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[504] Donald Coggan, letter to the London *Times* (30 August 1972) in the Ramsey Papers, v. 243, 148.

[505] Ibid.

British citizenship deserves the support of us all."[506] He recognized the difficulties that the situation would present for certain urban areas, but called on the churches of Britain to aid in the process of welcoming the new immigrants. He added: "I hope also that other countries will feel moved to join in helping the victims of a terrible act of racial oppression."[507] Once he had committed publicly to supporting the Ugandan Asians, Ramsey expended considerable rhetorical energy on their behalf, despite his initial silence.

Whitworth's reference to "Powellite pressures" indicated the sensitivity in Ramsey's circle to the prospect of tangling with the anti-immigration far right, particularly Powell, who in 1972 continued to be the most popular politician in Britain and to attack the Anglican episcopate in his speeches.[508] That someone carefully preserved such a large number of newspaper articles in the Ramsey Papers likely demonstrated some archiepiscopal nervousness over the attacks, which frequently precipitated torrents of hostile correspondence for Ramsey. When Ramsey was shouted down at St. Martin's Church in late 1968, one of his hecklers exclaimed, "Enoch Powell is right!"[509] On a newspaper clipping about yet another highly charged Powell speech, Whitworth wrote: "I do not think the Archbishop would want to bandy words with Mr.

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[506] Ramsey, public statement on the expulsion of the Ugandan Asians (4 September 1972) in the Ramsey Papers, v. 243, 157.

[507] Ibid.

[508] Powell retained his following among the British public until 1974, when he encouraged voters to cast their ballots for Labor rather than the Tories, thereby alienating his conservative admirers. He took this position after Conservative Prime Minister Edward Heath took Britain into the European Economic Community in 1973. Powell never regained the levels of popularity that he had commanded between 1968 and 1974. See Heffer, 710-712.

[509] Ramsey Papers, v. 141, 253.

Powell."[510] After the first wave of Ugandan Asians arrived in late 1972 (around 30,000 would eventually settle in the United Kingdom), Ramsey provided some of them with lodging at Lambeth Palace. Of one incident, Chadwick wrote: "He gave a Lambeth Palace cottage to a homeless Ugandan refugee family till they should find something better, and this charitable act brought him a pile of some of the most vitriolic post he ever received. Someone tried to accuse him of racial discrimination [against whites] before the Race Relations Board."[511] For Ramsey, such incidents only confirmed his belief that many immigration opponents were motivated by racial resentment and cultural panic.

After 1972, immigration ceased to be one of the dominant issues in British politics. The Brixton riot of 1981 resurrected the issue, but only briefly. Ramsey's stances in favor of the rights of Commonwealth immigrants in the 1960s marked the beginning of the Church of England's longstanding commitment to community relations. The archbishop's prominent status in the British political and social establishment made him an influential spokesman on the topic. In hindsight, his role in the immigration debates has to be seen as one of the defining moments of his career.

5. Conclusion

Because of his Incarnational social theological proclivities, Archbishop Ramsey believed that respect for human dignity was the most important consideration in social policy. Race, religion, and sexual orientation should never cause minority groups to be treated differently under the law. On the Homosexual Offenses Bill, the Rhodesian crisis, and the debate over immigration, Ramsey saw the issues in terms of compassion for the

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[510] Whitworth, undated newspaper clipping in the Ramsey Papers, v. 243, 215.

[511] Chadwick, 268.

socially disempowered. He believed that those who exercised power had an obligation to do so impartially and with the awareness that their actions had the potential to cause much unnecessary human suffering. He was sceptical about the use of state power to control private behaviour between consenting adults. In certain cases, he believed that traditional morality could be jettisoned if that enabled the reform of unjust and archaic laws.

CHAPTER V

THE INCARNATION, THE CHURCH, AND BRITISH SOCIETY

The purpose of this dissertation has been to revise historical understanding of Michael Ramsey's place in the liberal catholic tradition in Anglicanism. While he was not an avowed Christian Socialist, he formed most of his thinking on social and political issues through his readings of Maurice, Gore, and Temple. His scholarly work in theology and Church history placed a strong emphasis on the social aspects of the Christian faith. His writings after the late 1950s contained much commentary on diverse political issues. His activism as Archbishop of Canterbury demonstrated his commitment to tolerance and social justice. To date, Ramsey remains the most politically active and controversial Primate of All England since the death of William Temple in 1944.

The scholarly consensus on Ramsey has been that his work in biblical theology was the key to understanding his religious views. The names that recur in analyses of Ramsey's intellectual lineage are Hoskyns and Barth; occasionally, writers have also referred to Maurice and Temple, but only to note that Ramsey wrote historical works about them. I have argued that Ramsey was continuously preoccupied with social theology throughout his career, and that this interest was evident even before he entered seminary in 1926. His unpublished memoirs of his Cambridge days demonstrated the intersection of Asquithian politics and liberal social theology in the early years of his clerical career. As a staunch Liberal in the early decades of the twentieth century, Ramsey inherited the reforming political tradition of William Gladstone. Gladstone's increasingly radical Liberalism transformed British society and politics in the second half

of the nineteenth century, and also laid the groundwork for the great reforms of Asquith's premiership, such as the Parliament Act of 1911 and, eventually, Irish Home Rule. Ramsey shared the Gladstonian suspicion of entrenched power, as well as the belief that those who exercised power were obligated to justify proposals to deny rights to those who lacked influence.

Most of Ramsey's biblical theological writings contained strong social theological elements. The locus of his religious life was the Incarnation, which formed the basis of his social theology and permeated the majority of his published writings on Anglican history, although not his work in biblical theology. Because he made his academic career as a specialist in biblical theology, scholars have overlooked the importance that he placed upon the Incarnation. The two greatest influences on Ramsey's theology were Maurice and Gore, in whose writings he found an ideal fusion of theological erudition and political activism. They emphasized human dignity and social justice because they believed that, through the Incarnation, Christ had sanctified humankind, and that society should reflect that. In *From Gore to Temple*, Ramsey described the Incarnation as "an actual interpenetration of the temporal by the eternal, the natural by the supernatural."[512] Ramsey's speeches in the Lords during the 1960s and 1970s portrayed social interactions in Incarnational terms derived largely from Maurice's *Kingdom of Christ*.

One of my goals in writing this dissertation has been to demonstrate the activist nature of Ramsey's spiritual leadership. His tenure at Canterbury marked the creation of the modern liberal Anglican establishment. Until Ramsey's appointment, the twentieth-century Archbishops of Canterbury had mostly been servants of privilege, with the exception of William Temple, whose primacy (1942-1944) was too brief to implement

[512] *From Gore to Temple*, 108.

longterm changes within the episcopal hierarchy. Ramsey's immediate successor, Donald Coggan, was a moderate evangelical with a distinguished scholarly background and liberal social views, and during his brief period at Canterbury (1974-1980) he did not pursue a prominent role in social or political debates. However, Ramsey's liberal catholic primacy strongly influenced later Primates such as Robert Runcie (who served from 1980 until 1991) and Rowan Williams (who has served since 2003 and will retire in 2012), both of whom combined Anglo-Catholicism with an outspoken concern for social justice.

Under Archbishop Ramsey, the Church of England ceased to be "the Tory party at prayer," and later Conservative figures such as Margaret Thatcher and Norman Tebbitt exhibited considerable mistrust towards the Anglican episcopate. Thatcherite critics of liberal bishops during the 1980s and up until the early 2000s often used rhetoric similar to that of Lord Dilhorne and Enoch Powell in the 1960s. The origins of the Church's political evolution (and its subsequent estrangement from the Conservative Party) lay in Ramsey's primacy.

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