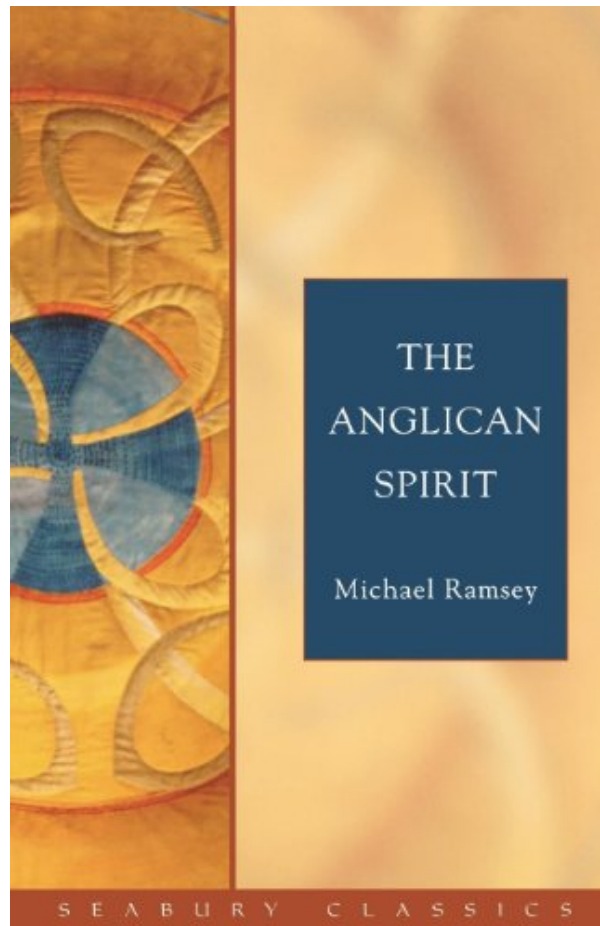
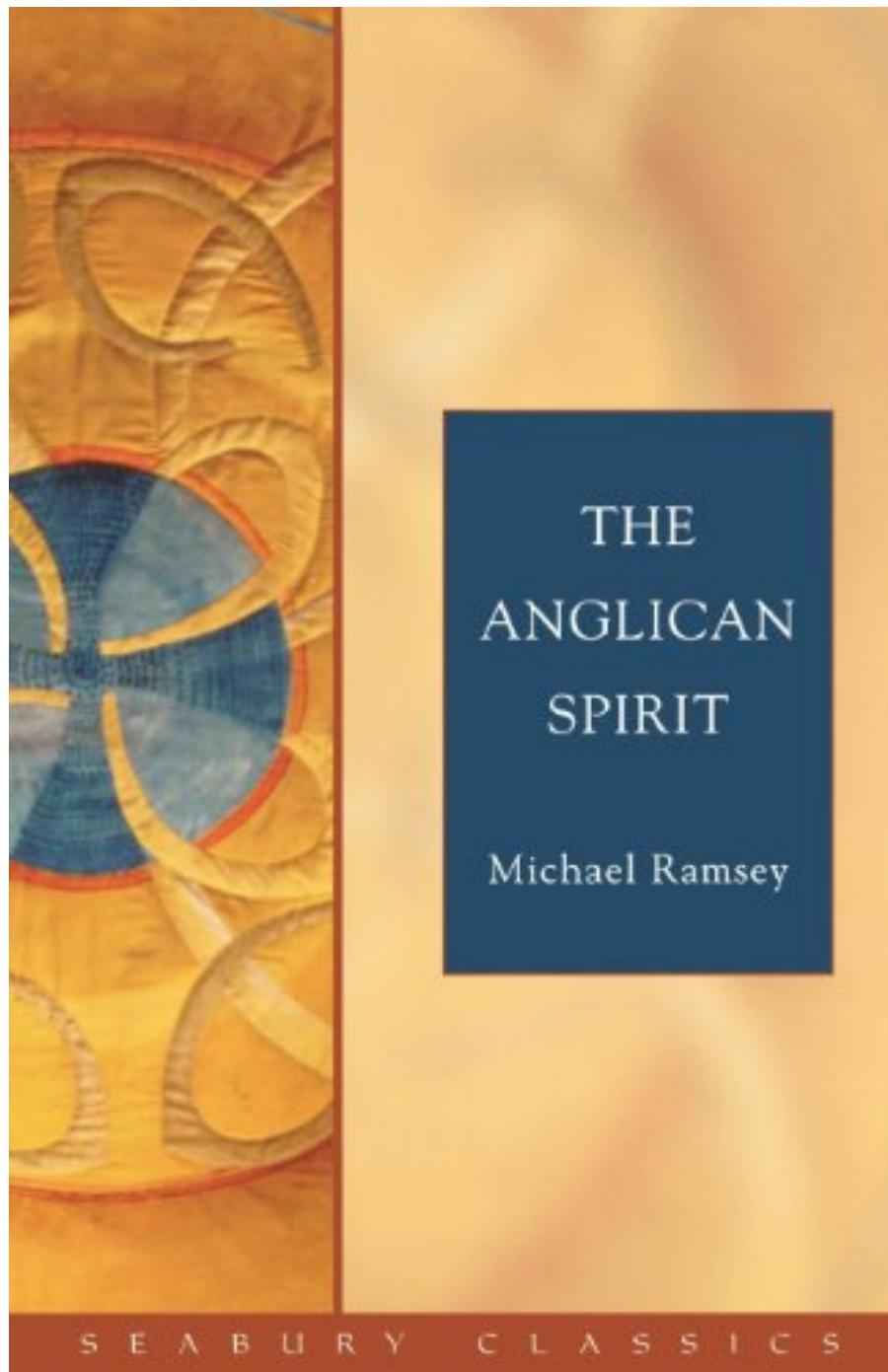


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Ramsey, one of the greatest Archbishops of Canterbury, delivered these previously unpublished reflections on the ethos, historical tradition, and emphasis of Anglicanism to an American audience in 1979. Ramsey here stresses the catholicity, scriptural basis, and the use of reason and experience, as well as the openness to various interpretation and emphases within the Anglican tradition. His own evaluation of the strengths and weaknesses of various trends within Anglicanism makes this book especially important. Highly recommended for seminary and large public and academic libraries.

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About the Author

Arthur Michael Ramsey was born in 1904, became Archbishop of Canterbury in 1961, and died in 1988. His published works include, *The Gospel and the Catholic Church*, *From Gore to Temple: An Era in Anglican Theology*, *Holy Spirit*, and *The Christian Priest Today*. The Rev. Dale Coleman, rector of the Church of the Holy Faith in Santa Fe, New Mexico and friend of the late Michael Ramsey, compiled and edited these lectures delivered by Ramsey at Nashotah House, an Episcopal Seminary.

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"Of such figures in the twentieth century, there is no doubt at all that Michael Ramsey is among the most eminent and among the most deeply loved. This book is a treasure, a digest of some of his most significant academic work that can be read by anyone at all who is seeking to know and love God more. At a time of struggle and uncertainty for the Anglican Communion, his is a voice urgently needed, and it is a delight to see this new edition."--Rowan Williams

Archbishop Michael Ramsey was one of the church's most remarkable twentieth-century saints--wise and humble, humorous and compassionate. These introductory lectures on Anglicanism reveal the breadth of Ramsey's theological understanding, his ecumenism, and his vision of the church and the Christian life. Informal and conversational in style, the lectures offer an overview of Anglican theology, spirituality, and history.

Ramsey begins with Anglicanism's enduring characteristics, including its dependence on Scripture, tradition--the ancient writers of the church who guide us in interpreting the Bible--and reason, our God-given capacity for divine revelation. Next Ramsey explores its teachings on theology and the sacraments, Tractarianism and the Oxford Movement, the renaissance of Anglican religious communities, and the evolving doctrines of creation, incarnation, and the Holy Spirit. The final section presents Ramsey's theology of the church and Anglicanism's relationship to Rome and the Orthodox churches.

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An Excellent Introduction

By benjamin

Rowan Williams, the current Archbishop of Canterbury, notes in his foreword that this is a book that is really needed right now. Given that tensions in the Anglican Communion have been increasing for quite some time and that they are now at the point where the Anglican Communion is likely to change in some significant and painful ways over the next few months, it is well worth looking back and seeing something of what others (particularly the heroes of the past!) saw when they looked at Ekklesia Anglicana.

This work is a short one. Compiled from class notes and given Ramsey's editorial approval, the chapters that make up *The Anglican Spirit* come across as quite conversational - much as if one were sitting the classroom where Ramsey first delivered these. In short, Ramsey gives a quick tour of the history of Anglican thought and practice while giving a bit of theological commentary on the side: criticisms, critiques and approvals. He brings out things that one would likely not know if one were not an expert and well trained in the history of Anglican thought - again, giving the book a conversational tone while sacrificing none of its content.

One is left with a sense that Anglicanism does have a grounding in Scripture, Tradition and Reason - that, contrary to what many think, one may really speak of an Anglican spirit and an Anglican thought process. Anglicans, like other Christians, hold the Scriptures in the highest regard and they believe that the Scriptures must be read not only in the light of higher Biblical criticism, but through the light of the many different thinkers of the Church, especially the creeds and the first four Ecumenical Councils. Ramsey notes that these four have always been authoritative for Anglicans in a way that the last three Ecumenical Councils were not - not that they were or are wrong, but that they never had a grip on the Western (Anglican, Roman Catholic and Protestant) imagination as a whole.

Perhaps more difficult, though, is the idea that "reason" - the bogeyman of so much contemporary thought - ought to play a part in the Christian life in general, and the Anglican life in particular. Ramsey does not propose that one ought to disregard the past in light of new cultural configurations, but that one must ask one's self - the Church must ask itself - how the Gospel is to be given in such a way that its relevancy is seen in a particular culture. This is not watered-down relativism, but an honest and forthright approach to reading both Scripture and Tradition in light of one's contemporary situation.

It would have been welcome to read a chapter on how exactly the Church is to use Reason to engage a particular culture, but Ramsey doesn't touch upon this (perhaps it was not as urgent an issue when this book was first put together a good 13 years ago). Yet, perhaps there is an answer in his ecclesiology. He proves quite prophetic at points, particularly when he discusses unilateralism in the communion and how dangerous it is not only to Anglicans but to all Christians. One can - and should - ask whether or not this means that Ramsey refuses to let a given culture be self-justifying; it is worth reading his chapter on the church and noting what he doesn't say as much as what he does say.

Yet, when he discusses the relationship of Anglicanism to the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches, he notes that Anglicanism does not exist for itself and that perhaps the time will come when it will have to dissolve to make way for a greater good in the Church catholic. While very few would want to see this happen, one must admit that it takes a good bit of humility to write this sort of thing, especially since Ramsey was the Archbishop of Canterbury at a truly revolutionary time in both global Christianity and world history.

Hopefully these latter words of Ramsey's will prove to be less prophetic and more along the lines of a warning, not unlike the recent Windsor Report. Of course, only time will tell. In the time between, however, this is an excellent introduction to the spirit of Anglicanism by someone who truly was one of Anglicanism's greatest spirits.

[This book is perfectly complemented by Mark Chapman's Anglicanism: A Very Short Introduction (Very Short Introductions).]

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A classic on genuine anglicanism

By Tony S.

Michael Ramsey (former Archbishop of Canterbury) sets out the history and heart of anglicanism in this very readable introduction to Anglicanism. His insights and perceptions help us get to the history and heart of true anglicanism and its relationship to other churches, especially the Roman Catholic.

The first 2 chapters are key for anyone wanting to discover or return to genuine anglicanism, versus a (post-)modernist, liberal interpretation. Enjoy it!

5 of 6 people found the following review helpful.

Great Introduction

By John M. Mabus

This book was a great introduction to the Anglican Faith. It is presented in a conversational manner, not a dry text book approach. I am very thankful for the helpful and refreshing overview as I investigate the Anglican tradition.

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