

The Possibility of Religious Language: Models and Disclosures in Ian Ramsey

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I. The Challenge of Logical Empiricism to Religious Language

Ian Ramsey did most of his writings in the middle part of the twentieth century, a time when logical empiricism was dominating the world of analytical philosophy. The earliest founders of logical empiricism were G. E. Moore and Bertrand Russell. For both of these thinkers, what can be said should be said plainly.¹ Philosophy, according to Russell, has the task of analyzing and clarifying language in order to make clear the truth of reality. As for Moore, he aimed at stating the common sense meaning in propositions and sought to refute metaphysical loftiness, which to him was merely an abuse of language.²

The ideas of Moore and Russell engendered the second phase of the movement of modern analytical thought — the stage of logical positivism. Such development in the European continent was mostly due to the work of the Vienna

1 Ian T. Ramsey, *Religious Language* (London: SCM, 1969), 11.

2 Jerry H. Gill, *Ian Ramsey: To Speak Responsibly of God* (London: George Allen & Unwin, 1976), 18.