

Note: This Work has been made available by the authority of the copyright owner solely for the purpose of private study and research and may not be copied or reproduced except as permitted by the copyright laws of Canada without the written authority from the copyright owner.

Faught, C. Brad. Review of *God Save the Queen: The Spiritual Heart of the Monarchy*, by Ian Bradley. London: Continuum, 2012. *Anglican and Episcopal History* 82, no. 2 (2013): 218-219.

BOOK REVIEWS

God Save the Queen: The Spiritual Heart of the Monarchy. By Ian Bradley.
(London and New York, Continuum, 2012, Pp. xxxiv, 299. \$25.00.)

Timed to coincide with Queen Elizabeth II's sixty years on the British throne, this Diamond Jubilee Edition of a book first published in 1999 provides a deep probing of a thousand years of the institution of sacred monarchy in the United Kingdom and a compelling rationale for its continuation there. Ian Bradley has long been the dominant voice on this aspect of the British monarchy and in this iteration of the book he adds an important and enlightening chapter—"The way ahead"—on what he sees as the future of the institution in an age that has become increasingly disenchanted, to use the precise meaning of the term.

Bradley begins by offering an overview of the development of sacred monarchy in the Hebrew Bible and its subsequent adoption by Judeo-Christian/European civilization. He might have given a nod to ancient Sumer in this regard as having been foundational to later conceptions of the "High King," but, that said, he argues persuasively for monarchy's place as an indispensable political construct in the creation of English, Welsh, Scottish, and Irish identity and subsequent (united) Christian nationhood. He implies, indeed, that recognition of sacred monarchy is intrinsic to Christianity itself, leaving readers with the rather loaded question of whether or not republicans—with their automatic denunciation of kings—can be wholly Christian? While such an implication is surely to rankle Bradley's American readers especially, the question is of considerably more than mere rhetorical value.

Much of the book, however, is not history of this more antiquarian type, but rather of the orthodoxies and practices of the modern British monarchy of the twentieth century and the long reign of Elizabeth II, a tenure stretching now well into the twenty-first. He lauds the queen for exhibiting a total devotion to duty while at the same time being consummate politically in her chief role as the timeless, non-partisan embodiment of the British state. He lays bare the thorny question of a Christian confessional monarch being at the head of a church-state compact in

a contemporary multi-faith society, but finds in answering it no necessary incompatibility. Yes, the constituent parts of monarchy need to come to terms with modern politics, but Bradley sees Elizabeth II as having brought that about in her own person. What matters more in the present and beyond, he suggests, is monarchy's surpassing power to embody the shared values of the whole nation: it is here that "the greatest strength of monarchy lies" (274). Over the composition of such values Bradley suggests there is broad agreement across all the usual cleavages in modern British society. He cites service, openness, and tolerance, among others, as being widely shared and makes a convincing case for the cultural and societal power of monarchy to act as glue in the binding together of a citizenry that is otherwise diverse to the point of anomie.

This book provides a timely examination of a timeless topic, which those in the world of British church and state would do well to read. But to others it is equally informative and instructive of the ways and means of the British monarchy and the centrality to it of the Christian faith. To *a priori* republicans Bradley may happily represent the last of a dying breed; but to those seeking to understand the essence of sacred monarchy and why it has maintained such enduring appeal this book is nothing less than erudite and comprehensive and is therefore highly recommended.

C. Brad Faught

Tyndale University College, Toronto