

innovative, contemporary forms of worship. I suspect such a writer might challenge robustly the implication of the collection taken as a whole: that the Prayer Book remains a vital element of what constitutes Anglicanism – and that not merely as a statement of historical fact, but as a statement of what should be, or perhaps even *is*, the case. This is a book written, largely, by the persuaded. Christopher Woods affirms ‘when something has influenced the language of a culture so deeply, it is inconceivable that it should disappear from use’ (p. 154). I’m not sure he’s right – or even that Anglicans should really want him to be.

Peter Waddell

Dean of Chapel, University of Winchester

Robert Beaken, *Cosmo Lang: Archbishop in War and Crisis* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2012), pp. 320, ISBN:978-1780763552.
doi:10.1017/S1740355314000035

In Anglican historiography Cosmo Lang can best be viewed as a transitional primate deprived of the lingering Anglican establishment enjoyed by his predecessor Randall Davidson, but not yet facing the sectarian world that confronted his successors. Unfavourably compared with his wartime successors, William Temple (whom he outlived) and Geoffrey Fisher, Lang has endured much the same fate as the interwar governments of Stanley Baldwin and Neville Chamberlain, whose policies have all too often been unfavourably compared with those of the postwar Labour administration of Clement Attlee.

A reassessment of Lang is clearly overdue and Robert Beaken provides the reader with a most sympathetic biographical treatment, though one clearly focused on the character of his subject rather than the world that he inhabited. In his opening chapter, Beaken describes Lang’s Scottish and Presbyterian roots, his brilliant university career and his abrupt embrace of Anglo Catholicism. If Lang walked with kings, his Caledonian upbringing ensured that he never lost the common touch. As vicar of the working-class parish of Portsea, he learned to know his communicants, while as the youthful suffragan bishop of Stepney he became increasingly aware of the gulf that lay between the institutional church and many of the nation’s citizens.

Beaken devotes a significant portion of his introductory chapter to issues of personal character, most notably the tension between ambition and duty that troubled Lang from an early age. Less an academic than a lawyer *manqué*, Lang’s communications left little room for ambiguity. Frustratingly for the historian, he confided nothing to a diary, either devotional or practical, forcing Beaken to rely upon a 1935 address to Croydon Rotarians for Lang’s understanding of the role of the office of the archbishop (pp. 60–61). Beaken is nevertheless able to identify a style of high church devotionalism that he dubs ‘Christ-centred Trinitarianism’ (p. 25), which made Lang sympathetic to the concerns of more advanced Anglo Catholics even when he did not necessarily share them.

Another area into which Beaken chooses to delve – perhaps inevitably in the present age – is that of sexuality. Noting the fact of Lang's lifelong celibacy and his close relationships with a succession of young chaplains, including Dick Sheppard and Wilfred Parker, Beaken directly tackles recent charges that Lang was a closet homosexual. While acknowledging Lang's growing loneliness in later life and the peculiar wording of some of his letters, he concludes that the associations that developed tended to be an unusually intense form of father-son relationship. It also remains a fact that Lang also enjoyed close relationships with several women, including the actress Ann Todd.

Lang's arrival at Bishopthorpe at the tender age of 43 in 1908 set the seal on a successful clerical career. As head of the Northern Province, Lang conciliated suspicious Evangelical bishops, promoted the establishment of new dioceses in Sheffield, Bradford and Blackburn, and even became the first archbishop of York to go down a coal mine. Though flagging somewhat as he entered his seventh decade, he remained a power with which to be reckoned, and succeeded to the primacy of Canterbury at a moment when the clerical establishment was still reeling from a bruising two-year debate over the proposed new *Book of Common Prayer* (well documented in John Maiden's *National Religion and the Prayer Book Controversy* [Boydell and Brewer, 2009]) that exposed the limited authority of the new Church Assembly.

In his discussion of the archiepiscopal office between the wars (Chapter 3) and liturgy and the Prayer Book (Chapter 6) Beaken convincingly demonstrates how much Lang governed by consent, facing, as he did, an increasingly independent bench of bishops who made it very clear that they would resist primatial interference in diocesan affairs. Lang's task thus tended to be one of persuasion and reconciliation, whether in the House of Lords, the Church Assembly or in private correspondence. Beaken also demonstrates that Lang's most significant decision for church-state relations was in effect to disregard the parliamentary rejection of the 1928 Prayer Book and act on 'administrative discretion' in authorizing its use by parishes that wished to do so (pp. 153–54). He stresses Lang's commitment to evangelization and renewal, evident both in his personal preaching and in radio broadcasts (in which the archbishop was a pioneer).

A second major theme of the biography is Lang's relationship to the monarchy (Chapter 4) and, more specifically, the part he played in the Abdication Crisis of 1937 (Chapter 5). From his contact with the ageing Queen Victoria while vicar of Portsea, to his close relationship with George V and Queen Mary, for whom he delivered the coronation sermon in 1911, and his stormy interactions with Edward VIII, Beaken convincingly demonstrates Lang's conception of the role of the monarchy (pp. 74–79). It was this understanding that was to be pushed to breaking point by George V's son and heir and was ultimately to make Lang a party to securing Edward VIII's abdication. Beaken's intention, using newly available sources, is to refute the position adopted by Lang's first biographer, J.G. Lockhart, that Lang played no active role in the Abdication Crisis (pp. 136–37) and it is safe to say that he has succeeded in his object. Lang's one grave miscalculation came during his infamous radio broadcast, when he was perceived as hitting the ex-king when he was already down (pp. 119–24).

Beaken concludes his biography with a study of Lang's activities during the Second World War (Chapter 7). Whether in the maintenance of public morale, preparing for eventual peace, addressing the needs of evacuees and Jewish

refugees, organizing military chaplaincies or developing a suitable wartime liturgy, he shows Lang to have been the consummate manager of crises, something for which the previous decade had already shaped him.

If Beaken provides an admirable glimpse of the man behind the cope and mitre, the obvious limitation of his biography is that it too often fails to speak to the époque. Lang was responsible for the translation of William Temple to York in 1929 and the two enjoyed a close relationship until Temple's death in 1945. In practice, almost half of Beaken's roughly twenty references to Temple appear in Beaken's chapter on World War II and there is no discussion of Lang's attitude toward the World Conference on Faith in Order in 1937 and the Malvern Conference in 1941 in both of which Temple played a leading role.

Equally strange is Beaken's failure seriously to address the worldwide economic depression that devastated large areas of the country (including much of the Northern Province) during Lang's primacy. Granted that Lang was not as involved in debates about economic planning as Temple, it seems highly unlikely that his private correspondence or his interactions with his fellow bishops kept him shielded from day-to-day reality. It would also be interesting to know the nature of Lang's relationship with Ramsay Macdonald (a fellow Scot who had inflicted Ernest Barnes upon the Church of England as bishop of Birmingham in 1924) and his attitude to the national governments that governed from 1931 to 1945.

Finally, it is striking that a history of a twentieth-century archbishop of Canterbury can be produced with no allusion to the Lambeth Conference in its index. While there are two passing references to the conference (pp. 43 and 47) and one to the Lambeth Consultative Body (p. 59), they in no way reflect an analysis of the Lambeth Conference of 1930, made notorious by the adoption of Resolution 15 (Marriage and Sex) by the divisive vote of 193–67. Given the long-term implications of the endorsement of birth control for mainstream Protestantism in general and Anglicanism in particular, it would have been of great interest to know Lang's views on the matter.

Such reservations notwithstanding, Robert Beaken's study is a lively, sympathetic and well-documented account of one of the twentieth-century's forgotten archbishops of Canterbury. If Lang endured an unrewarding decade in striving to restore the spiritual influence of the Church of England, he still refused to be daunted by the magnitude of the task. It was, fundamentally, a very Anglican primacy.

Jeremy Bonner
University of Durham

John Drury, *Music at Midnight: The Life and Poetry of George Herbert* (London: Allen Lane, 2013), ISBN:978-1-846-14248-2 (hardback).

doi:10.1017/S1740355314000047

The 'music at midnight' of John Drury's title is neither the sound of George Herbert's lute, which he played beautifully, nor that of his song, but the simple remembrance, late at night, of a kindly deed. For Herbert, who was a gifted