

THE ARCHBISHOP OF CANTERBURY, THE
LORD CHAMBERLAIN AND THE CENSORSHIP
OF THE THEATRE, 1909–49

by PETER WEBSTER

It was ever the lot of the archbishops of Canterbury to be involved in seemingly incongruous affairs. The position of the archbishop at the heart of the Establishment engendered requests to be patron, advocate or opponent of almost every conceivable development in national life. One such entanglement was his role as unofficial advisor to the Lord Chamberlain in the matter of the licensing of stage plays.

Under the Theatres Act of 1843, the Lord Chamberlain, in addition to his duties in ordering the royal household, was responsible for the review and licensing of all plays intended for commercial production in an area of London which covered the main theatrical district in the West End; a system limited in theory but in fact observed nationwide. According to the report of the 1909 Joint Select Committee on the system, he was able to refuse a licence to any play that was likely ‘to do violence to the sentiment of religious reverence’, to be indecent, or ‘to be calculated to conduce to crime or vice’.¹ It was on matters such as these that from time to time the Lord Chamberlain’s office would consult the archbishop.

Despite the apparent oddity of a senior churchman being asked to adjudicate on artistic matters such as this, the matter has hitherto received little attention from religious historians to match that given to the censorship of the cinema and to the Lady Chatterley trial of 1960.² It has also received scant attention from successive archiepiscopal biographers, due perhaps to its apparently epiphe-

¹ Dominic Shellard and Steve Nicholson, with Miriam Handley, *The Lord Chamberlain Regrets ... A History of British Theatre Censorship* (London, 2004), 61–3, at 63.

² G. I. T. Machin, ‘British Churches and the Cinema in the 1930s’, in Diana Wood, ed., *The Church and the Arts*, SCH 28 (Oxford, 1992), 477–88; on *Chatterley*, see Mark Roodhouse, ‘Lady Chatterley and the Monk: Anglican Radicals and the Lady Chatterley Trial of 1960’, *JEH* 59 (2008), 475–500; in the present volume, Stuart Mews, ‘The Trials of *Lady Chatterley*, the Modernist Bishop and the Victorian Archbishop: Clashes of Class, Cultures and Generations’, 000–00.

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nominal nature.³ The role of the archbishops is treated in passing in general accounts of the censorship, but by its very nature this scholarship has not treated the theme directly.⁴

The present essay does not attempt to review wider Christian reactions to perceived irreverence or obscenity on the stage. Discussion of the religious and moral views of the successive Lord Chamberlains and their officers when applied to stage plays is also beyond its scope. Taking as its period the forty years from the Joint Select Committee report in 1909 to the unsuccessful attempt in Parliament to reform the system in 1949, it details the curious unofficial position of the archbishops within the system of censorship. The various grounds on which Archbishops Randall Davidson (1903–28) and Cosmo Gordon Lang (1928–42) in particular offered their advice to the Lord Chamberlain are then examined.⁵ The essay thus provides a case study of the singular and often anomalous position of the archbishop at the heart of the Establishment in Britain, and the extent to which the secular and ecclesiastical powers combined in the regulation of the life of the nation, both moral and aesthetic. In addition, it examines a unique nodal point in the interaction between the Church and the arts.

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One of the chief criticisms made of the censorship was of its secretive and unaccountable operation. The Lord Chamberlain needed neither to make public nor to justify privately his decisions, and there was no right of appeal. Within this already opaque system, the archbishop had a yet more shadowy position, being nowhere named as an advisor. His role was therefore not publicized, and on more than one occasion his office took action to disassociate the archbishop from any such function.⁶ Despite this, his involvement

³ George Bell included a handful of letters in his *Randall Davidson: Archbishop of Canterbury*, 3rd edn, 2 vols (London, 1952), 2: 1211–15. There is still less in J. G. Lockhart, *Cosmo Gordon Lang* (London, 1949).

⁴ General accounts include Shellard and Nicholson, *The Lord Chamberlain Regrets*; Anthony Aldgate and James C. Robertson, *Censorship in Theatre and Cinema* (Edinburgh, 2005); Steve Nicholson, *The Censorship of British Drama 1900–68*, 3 vols (Exeter, 2003–9); John Johnston, *The Lord Chamberlain's Blue Pencil* (London, 1990).

⁵ The holders of the office of Lord Chamberlain during this period were Lord William Sandhurst (1912–21); John, 8th Duke of Atholl (1921–2); Rowland, 2nd Earl of Cromer (1922–38); George, 6th Earl of Clarendon (1938–52).

⁶ This action extended to correcting reports in the press, as in the case of the play

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was apparently enough of an open secret by 1949 to be mentioned in Parliament.⁷

The archbishops had also to reckon with lobbying with regard to decisions that had already been made, from both within and outside the Church. In 1912 Davidson was invited to a private production of *The Secret Woman* by Eden Phillpotts, a performance intended to garner influential support for the reversal of some changes ordered by the censor.⁸ In addition, the Public Morality Council, under the guidance of the bishop of London, frequently addressed the Lord Chamberlain directly on the overall direction of plays already licensed. The Council kept Lambeth Palace informed of its activities, and was on at least one occasion supported privately by the archbishop.⁹

The other Christian Churches were of course concerned with the state of the theatre. The decision to license *Family Portrait* in 1939, a play which depicted the life of Christ's siblings, was vigorously opposed by Roman Catholic representatives of the highest standing.¹⁰ It was also the case that representatives of other denominations were from time to time drawn into the informal consultations before a play was licensed.¹¹ By and large, however, the privilege of being consulted about new plays as a matter of course remained reserved to the archbishop alone.

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Amongst the many and various matters on which Davidson and Lang were consulted, some were easier to adjudicate than others.

Public Saviour No. 1 in 1935: London, LPL, Lang Papers, vol. 137, fols 20–4.

⁷ *Hansard House of Commons* (ser. 5), vol. 463, col. 742 (25 March 1949).

⁸ London, LPL, Davidson Papers, vol. 180, fol. 39, Maggie Ponsonby to Davidson [hereafter: RTD], 29 February 1912. On the affair, see Nicholson, *Censorship*, 1: 88.

⁹ The London Council for the Promotion of Public Morality awaits its historian. On its impact in relation to the theatre, see Nicholson, *Censorship*, 1: 158–9, 300. See the 'Memorial' on the depiction of sexual scenes, sent to the Prime Minister in August 1925: Davidson Papers, vol. 205, fols 250–1. Davidson wrote in support of a 1927 memorial on the use of bad language: *ibid.*, vol. 215, fol. 288, RTD to Cromer, 8 October 1927.

¹⁰ London, BL, Lord Chamberlain's Correspondence [hereafter: LCP, CORR] 1939/2844 *Family Portrait*, Cromer to Lady Winifred Elwes (Catholic Women's League), 6 June 1940; Nicholson, *Censorship*, 2: 145–6.

¹¹ See the correspondence concerning a proposed English production of the Oberammergau passion play: Lang Papers, vol. 102, fols 200–23, October–December 1930.

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The one rule that was applied consistently throughout the whole period was the ban on any impersonation of the three persons of the Trinity: a clear rule, easily and thus frequently applied. In some cases, the decision was made easy by the manner of the play itself, as with one which not only showed Christ (as a child), but was a 'travesty of the method of mystical interpretation' and presented a Christ fundamentally different to that portrayed by the Church.¹² Davidson also advised, however, against the licensing of a Irish nativity play, translated by Lady Gregory, a work free from doctrinal difficulty and indeed 'conceived in a reverent spirit'.¹³ Were it licensed, Davidson feared that it would become much more difficult, if not impossible, to rule against a less reverent treatment of an equally central event. The rule, for Davidson, was clear and easily understood by public and playwrights alike: 'Its value lies in its definiteness.'¹⁴

It has been this inflexibility which has attracted greatest censure in the general literature on the censorship, particularly since playwrights of the standing of John Masefield and George Moore were to be caught by it.¹⁵ The most famous case was that of *The Green Pastures* by Marc Connelly, for which a licence was refused several times between 1930 and 1961. One commentator has described the treatment of the play as 'a blot on the record of stage censorship' and 'a monument to bureaucratic rigidity'.¹⁶ However, it was on this ground (representation of one of the persons of the Trinity) that Michael Ramsey (1961–74) was to give what may have been the last such advice, in 1961. It remained a rule that could be easily applied, even as most of the others became less and less tenable as time went on.¹⁷

The persistence of successive archbishops in upholding this rule was connected, at least in part, with the Church's adoption of a self-denying ordinance in relation to religious drama staged in

¹² Davidson Papers, vol. 205, fol. 237, RTD to Cromer, 17 June 1924.

¹³ Ibid., vol. 173, fols 26–7, RTD to Dawson, 19 June 1911.

¹⁴ Ibid., vol. 213, fols 98–100, RTD to Cromer, 10 March 1926.

¹⁵ On Masefield's *The Trial of Jesus* (1926), see Davidson's letter reproduced in Bell, *Davidson*, 1: 1213–15; Nicholson, *Censorship*, 1: 191–2. On Moore's *The Passing of the Essenes* (1930), see Nicholson, *Censorship*, 1: 167–8; Lang Papers, vol. 102, fols 190–1, Lang to Cromer, 27 October 1930.

¹⁶ Aldgate and Robertson, *Censorship*, 161

¹⁷ See the file at LCP, CORR, LR (1930), *Green Pastures*.

churches. The Act of 1843 exempted plays written before the passage of its predecessor of 1737, and as such the growing number of performances of the medieval mystery and morality plays could proceed without the need to obtain a licence.¹⁸ However, the period from the late 1920s saw an efflorescence of newly written religious drama, most prominently in the plays associated with Canterbury Cathedral, which included work by John Masefield (*The Coming of Christ*, 1928), Dorothy L. Sayers (*The Zeal of Thy House*, 1937; *The Devil to Pay*, 1939), and T.S. Eliot (*Murder in the Cathedral*, 1935).¹⁹ After some confusion, and the securing of repeated legal opinions, the Church of England had by the end of the period reassured itself that plays staged in churches as part of an act of worship did not fall within the remit of the Lord Chamberlain.²⁰ However, whilst plays written for church use were seldom irreverent or conducive to crime or vice, steps were taken to ensure that they should also not impersonate the persons of the Trinity. In 1930 Lang urged George Bell, Bishop of Chichester and president of the Religious Drama Society, 'to use all his influence to see that even Dramas of this kind produced in Church or under expressly religious influence and guidance should conform to [the Lord Chamberlain's] rule'.²¹ The policy was confirmed by a meeting of the bishops in 1938 and persisted well into the 1950s since, as Archbishop Geoffrey Fisher (1945–61) put it, as soon as the Church relaxed the rule itself 'there will be nothing to aid the Lord Chamberlain and the Film Censor in their very difficult task'.²² As with many other issues, the bishops were reluctant to take any unilateral action that might create gaps in the united front of state and Established Church.

There were other areas in which the archbishops tended to react

¹⁸ The plays had been edited by A. W. Pollard, *English Miracle Plays, Moralities and Interludes* (Oxford, 1890). This had reached its seventh edition by 1923.

¹⁹ Kenneth Pickering, *Drama in the Cathedral: The Canterbury Festival Plays 1928–1948* (Worthing, 1985).

²⁰ The question was considered in 1932, 1946 and 1950, with a policy document being privately circulated in 1952: copy at London, LPL, Fisher Papers, vol. 106, fols 239–42.

²¹ Lang Papers, vol. 102, fols 216–19, Lang to Cromer, 28 December 1930, at fol. 219.

²² Fisher Papers, vol. 204, fol. 85, Fisher to Leslie Hunter, Bishop of Sheffield, 31 May 1958. This was in connection with a proposed production of Dorothy L. Sayers's *The Man Born to be King*.

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conservatively, one of which was apparently disparaging portrayals of the Churches and other contemporary religious movements. In 1925 Davidson acted to reinforce the opinion of the Earl of Cromer (Lord Chamberlain 1922–38), of *The Last Judgment*, incongruously described as a ‘theological farce’. Written by Robert King, the play ridiculed the historical record and current modes of discourse of each of the main Churches, as well as reflecting more obliquely on doctrines of heaven, the last judgement and Scripture. Davidson found ‘a great deal that is rather gratuitously irreverent and would certainly cause indignation on the part of ordinary religious people, especially those of the conventional kind’.²³ A similar decision was taken in 1940 in relation to a play set during a house party of the Oxford Group, in which the attendees convince themselves that one member possesses miraculous powers. Alan Campbell Don, Lang’s chaplain writing on his behalf, conceded that whilst some aspects of the movement might well attract criticism, it nonetheless did some good and as such deserved the ‘sympathy and toleration of right-minded people ... I do not think that the stage is the proper place for the voicing of such criticisms.’²⁴ Here was the archbishop acting as a defender of Christian organizations in general, and not of the Church of England alone.

As has been observed by several of the historians of the censorship, there was a strong sense that action presented on stage retained a peculiarly powerful ability to influence the behaviour of the observer, such that matters which were uncontroversial in literature were wholly inappropriate on the stage.²⁵ As such, if any morally ambiguous matter was to be presented, the play would need to treat it in such a way that it could in no way be conducive to vice. Steve Nicholson has examined the differing treatment of two plays by Eugene Brieux (*Damaged Goods* and *Maternity*, the former being licensed but the latter not), showing that whilst the former was licensed as effective propaganda against venereal disease, the

²³ Davidson Papers, vol. 205, fol. 252, RTD to Cromer, 14 October 1925; Robert King, *The Last Judgment: A Theological Farce* (Tynemouth, 1929).

²⁴ Lang Papers, vol. 178, fols 334–6, Don to Colin Gordon, 26 February 1940. The play was *Our Brother Oliver*. On the ambivalence of the Established Church towards the movement, see David Bebbington, *Evangelicalism in Modern Britain: A History from the 1730s to the 1980s* (London, 1989), 235–40. On Lang’s own attitude, see Adrian Hastings, *A History of English Christianity 1920–1990*, 3rd edn (London, 1991), 288.

²⁵ Shellard and Nicholson, *The Lord Chamberlain Regrets*, ix.

latter was not licensed because it did not make a comparably clear moral statement.²⁶ Davidson admired the tone of *Maternity* and its avoidance of coarseness. However, whereas the moral of *Damaged Goods* had been ‘clearly and effectively drawn’, the main motive force of *Maternity* appeared to Davidson to be something other than as a corrective to seduction, desertion and abortion: as such ‘I fail to see what good purpose, social or moral or intellectual or educational its production in England at present would promote.’²⁷ A similar view was later taken in regard to *The Hand of the Potter* by Theodore Dreiser, which portrayed the psychological disintegration and suicide of a young man after the rape and murder of a young girl. Don advised that whilst the matter concerned was unsavoury, the play was one of serious purpose and was not obviously indecent. As such, Don thought it difficult to justify the refusal of a licence.²⁸ Permitting the depiction of issues of sexual morality on stage, whether unsavoury or not, was contingent on the overarching moral stance of the play.

If the rule on the representation of God was clear and easily understood, greater difficulties were attendant on scriptural subjects not involving the persons of the Trinity. In 1899 George Bernard Shaw had claimed that there was a complete prohibition of the portrayal of biblical stories.²⁹ However, as early as 1913, this particular rule was softening in the case of *Joseph and his Brethren* by Louis Parker. Sir Douglas Dawson, Comptroller of the Lord Chamberlain’s Office, thought the play so ‘glorious, so reverently & beautifully written, it could surely only work for good’, an opinion shared by Lord Chamberlain Sandhurst himself.³⁰ Dawson suggested that faced with a choice between a rigid prohibition

²⁶ Nicholson, *Censorship*, 1: 109–14, 131; Shellard and Nicholson, *The Lord Chamberlain Regrets*, 73–6.

²⁷ Quoted in full in Nicholson and Shellard, *The Lord Chamberlain Regrets*, 76.

²⁸ Lang Papers, vol. 164, fol. 162, Don to Norman Gwatkin, 27 May 1938. Theodore Dreiser’s *The Hand of the Potter: A Tragedy in Four Acts* was first published in New York in 1918. It was subsequently published in London in his *Plays, Natural and Supernatural* (Constable, 1930). See also Keith Newlin, *A Theodore Dreiser Encyclopedia* (Westport, CT, 2003), 177–9, 305.

²⁹ In an essay in the *North American Review*, quoted at length in Nicholson, *Censorship*, 1: 24–5.

³⁰ Davidson Papers, vol. 188, fols 106–7, Dawson to RTD, 1 February 1913; vol. 188, fols 104–5, Sandhurst to RTD, 31 January 1913. William Mansfield, 2nd Baron Sandhurst, was Lord Chamberlain 1912–21.

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and judging each play on its merits, '[a]ccording to modern ideas I think we incline to the latter course'. Davidson declared himself open to such movement, but not without some reservations. Whilst not advising against a licence, he nonetheless reflected that a clumsy rule was still easier to apply than no rule at all. The play contained, he agreed, nothing irreverent or indecorous, and the main pitfall of Potiphar's wife had been avoided. However, he was keen not to be seen as encouraging such plays, and particularly ones that might tread closer to the 'inner and sacred shrine of religious truth'.³¹ Davidson later advised the king against attending a performance of the same play, though it was 'all quite reverent and innocent', since the king's attendance might encourage further attempts to dramatize biblical stories 'which it wd. be difficult to condemn, but mischievous to encourage'.³²

Once any rigid rule was abandoned with regard to biblical subjects, the archbishops were exposed to the need to adjudicate play by play. They occasionally suggested amendments to scripts, to remove minor but contentious details from an otherwise unobjectionable whole. In one case, Don advocated the renaming of a character to remove any suggestion of identification with the real Matthias of Tyre, the disciple chosen to succeed Judas Iscariot, since the play suggested some sexual relation between the character and Mary Magdalene.³³ On other occasions the faults in a script were more fundamental. Had *The Chastening* by Charles Rann Kennedy not fallen foul of the rule of representing Christ, then Davidson would likely have recommended a ban in any case since '[s]o far as it catches public imagination at all it would be by replacing the Gospel picture with something fundamentally different'; the playwright had been 'aiming after an imitation of medieval mysticism without having in the least caught its spirit'.³⁴

The archbishops were well placed to give authoritative advice on orthodoxy. Of Davidson and Lang, it was Davidson, not himself a regular frequenter of the theatre, who was most often prepared to take issue with plays on apparently artistic grounds: an area

³¹ Ibid., vol. 188, fols 109–11, RTD to Sandhurst, 3 February 1913.

³² Ibid., vol. 189, fol. 140, RTD to Lord Arthur John Bigge Stamfordham [private secretary to the king], 4 November 1913.

³³ Lang Papers, vol. 164, fols 158–60, Don to Gwatkin, 9 February 1938. See also LCP, CORR 1938/1159, *The Love of Judas* [by Teresa Hooley and Cedric Wallis].

³⁴ Davidson Papers, vol. 205, fols 237–8.

in which the authority of the archbishops was less obvious. One play failed nearly all of the tests that were to be applied. Not only did it introduce the figure of Christ, but it was also ‘a travesty of the Gospel story’ in which the story was handled with a ‘reckless disregard of the fact as narrated in Scripture’. It was also ‘a commonplace, vulgar and illiterate production’, with its ‘shipwreck’ of grammatical and spelling errors an indication of its general manner.³⁵ Davidson advised the king that *Joseph and his Brethren*, whilst not harmful, offensive or profane, was nonetheless ‘poor stuff’, the biblical story marred by ‘second rate additions & third rate dialogue’.³⁶

However, the period either side of the First World War was one during which larger questions were beginning to be asked, that went beyond grammar and dialogue, as to both the desirability and characteristics of a new religious drama, produced by Christians but for the use of all. The period was also marked by increased experimentation with drama on religious subjects in churches, not least (from 1925) in Davidson’s own cathedral of Canterbury under its energetic new dean, George Bell.³⁷ With this experimentation arose the question of the artistic standard appropriate for sacred subjects, and of the relation between orthodoxy and artistic freedom.³⁸ In his reactions, Davidson often articulated the widely held conviction that sacred subjects somehow required a particular and higher standard of treatment. ‘I wish they did not write these Plays’ was his reaction to a 1924 play on the life of Judas Iscariot, ‘for the men who write them are not men qualified to handle these great subjects greatly’.³⁹ A later play on the same subject was ‘commonplace and dull’ and as such ‘I should greatly prefer that it were not

³⁵ Ibid., vol. 200, fols 8–10, RTD to Dawson, 24 October 1921, concerning an unidentified play.

³⁶ Ibid., vol. 189, fol. 140, RTD to Stamfordham, 4 November 1913.

³⁷ Ibid., vol. 180, fols 1–10. On Bell’s early experimentation at Canterbury, and other work nationally, see Peter Webster, ‘George Bell, John Masefield and “The Coming of Christ”: Context and Significance’, *Humanitas: The Journal of the George Bell Institute* 10 (2009), 111–24, at 112–14.

³⁸ Peter Webster, ‘The “Revival” of the Visual Arts in the Church of England, c.1935 – c.1956’, in Kate Cooper and Jeremy Gregory, eds, *Revival and Resurgence in Christian History*, SCH 44 (Woodbridge, 2008), 297–306.

³⁹ Davidson Papers, vol. 213, fol. 93, RTD to Cromer, 13 November 1924. This letter is given in full in Bell, *Randall Davidson*, 2: 1213.

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put on the stage for I think it will vulgarise things which ought to stand upon a totally different level.⁴⁰

Yet religious plays by serious playwrights held their own risks for the Church. The archbishops were occasionally faced with challenging scripts from prominent playwrights, far from the commonplace or dull. Davidson thought *Adam the Creator* by Karel Capek a remarkable play of serious purpose, which raised 'not unwholesomely the profound question of the world's existence ... by satirising contemporary life'. Was it, however, 'justifiable to present what is really an Aristophanic comedy in a Christian State? I doubt whether it is, for it does practically make God a party to a farce.' However, Davidson's sense of the limits of the censorship was acute. The play would probably scandalize those who had not thought through the profound religious issues involved, and those who had engaged with the issues might well disagree with the play's treatment of them, Davidson included. However, the archbishop nonetheless advised that a ban could not be justified. 'What you have to prevent is indecency or gross profanity, and flippant though this is I do not think that its general purport can be said to be either really profane or indecent.'⁴¹ One apparently throwaway remark from Davidson to Cromer further witnesses to the archbishop's unease: 'I am rather glad that Bernard Shaw does not take a Play of that sort in hand for he might raise for us much more perilous issues.'⁴²

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In 1940 Colin Gordon of the Lord Chamberlain's office solicited Lang's opinion on the play *Family Portrait* by the American playwrights Lenore and William Joyce Cowen. Don accepted the 'obvious reverence and restraint' of the script but raised some fundamental concerns. The first issue, as has already been noted, was the portrayal of the brothers and sisters of Christ, the very non-existence of whom was a matter of some importance to Roman Catholics and to some within the Church of England.

⁴⁰ Davidson Papers, vol. 215, fol. 294, RTD to Cromer, 19 November 1927.

⁴¹ LCP, CORR 1928/8304, *Adam the Creator*, Davidson to Cromer, 21 April 1928.

⁴² Webster, 'Bell and Masefield', 117; Paul Foster, 'The Goring Judgement: Is it still Valid?', *Theology* 102 (1999), 253–61. Davidson had seen Shaw's *St Joan* in 1924, and evidently appreciated it: Bell, *Randall Davidson*, 2: 1212.

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The second was the downplaying of the incarnation to the extent that Christ appeared as solely an ethical teacher, although a great one. Don concluded that the play ought not to be licensed in the usual way.⁴³

Here was the archbishop's representative advising in accustomed fashion. When called upon, Davidson and Lang had advised on the licensing of plays on a number of different grounds: the likelihood of incitement to vice or gratuitous offence to religious people; and theological or artistic defect. They helped shape the formulation of guiding principles, and advised in cases where there was doubt.

It is, however, an indication of the degree to which the situation had changed by 1940 that *Family Portrait* had in fact already been licensed the previous year, without reference to Lambeth at all. The query was in fact occasioned by a letter, after the licence had been issued, to the Lord Chamberlain from Canon J. K. Mozley of St Paul's. Gordon nonetheless concluded that Don's objections were not sufficient to revoke a licence already issued.⁴⁴

The exchange was one of the last of its kind. After a peak in the 1920s and early 1930s, there had been a marked decline in the number of plays referred to Lambeth. The reasons for this are too complex to treat at length here, although it may partly be explained by the involvement of Geoffrey Dearmer, poet and Anglican, and son of Percy Dearmer, as Reader of Plays for the Lord Chamberlain from 1936.⁴⁵ Lang's successors William Temple (1942–4) and Geoffrey Fisher were seldom consulted, although Fisher was kept informed of major changes in policy, such as the relaxation of restrictions on the portrayal of homosexuality in 1958. One of Fisher's few interventions was to reinforce the ban on *The Green Pastures* in 1951, a decision confirmed by Michael Ramsey ten years later.⁴⁶ So it was that the single stipulation relating to the impersonation of the persons of the Trinity was by 1949 the only remaining matter on which the archbishops advised the Lord Chamberlain.

⁴³ Lang Papers, vol. 178, fols 339–43, Don to Gordon, 2 April 1940.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. 178, fol. 344, Gordon to Don, 15 April 1940; LCP, CORR 1939/2844 *Family Portrait*, J. K. Mozley to the Lord Chamberlain, 14 March 1940

⁴⁵ Nicholson, *Censorship*, 2: 142–4.

⁴⁶ Fisher Papers, vol. 86, fols 210–12, Fisher to the Earl of Clarendon, 30 April 1951; London, LPL, Ramsey Papers, vol. 8, fol. 17, Ramsey to the Earl of Scarborough, 29 October 1961.

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I hope elsewhere to continue the story beyond 1949, and to treat of the attitude of Anglicans to the final abolition of theatre censorship in 1968. Anglican support for abolition was in part fostered by the manifest anachronism of the remaining rule and its stultifying effect on religious drama within the Church. That aside, the operation of the system to 1949 is demonstrative of some governing assumptions concerning the joint operation of Church and state in the regulation of morals; of understandings of the appropriate modes of representing the national faith; and of some of the tensions in the relationship between the Church and the arts.

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