

## Letter from J.J.C. Smart to A.N. Prior, May 16, 1955<sup>1</sup>

16.5.55

Dear Arthur

Thanks for your letter. The experts here didn't think that the erythema nodosum<sup>2</sup> could have possibly come from Mary and the children – the time was too long ago. I'm awfully sorry I didn't make that quite clear; I don't like the thought of Mary worrying. I also had a chat with the professor here (strictly between him and me, and the fact that I had it strictly between you and me; wouldn't want to [affect]<sup>3</sup> the susceptibilities of the practicing medical men!) He was reassuring. He said most people have had this without erythema nodosum and if I hadn't had the letter I'd probably never have had known [sic] about the lung enlargement. He agrees with your man about present dangers for Mary and the children. What a pity I cancelled my plane booking. It will be too late now, and perhaps it is wise not to come on other grounds. I'll be pretty busy in August, if all goes well, without conferences + ANZAAS<sup>4</sup> but I must try and see if I can slip over to Christchurch for a few days at any rate then. (Especially if my X-ray is favorable.) I do wish I could see you more – what a pity these big distances are.

With due respect for your superior judgment I wish you weren't lecturing on Time stuff for your John Locke lecturers. As I see it the choice (after Bouwsma) of Quine, Wang<sup>5</sup>, Prior, matl. Logic. I really wish your John Locke lecturers were on Modal Logic, many-valued systems, etc., including your stuff on Ł in J. Comp. Systems, your Turquette<sup>6</sup> [and so on.]<sup>7</sup> It is so aesthetically pleasing and it is fundamental sort of stuff. With your time stuff you'll get involved in side issues, even straight philosophy, and not in the stuff that will do Oxford most good. That's what I think. What does Gilbert think? I really think that you should keep your best stuff for Oxford, and that I am inclined to think is your modal logic stuff. (You'll bring it in in the other, but it won't stand out so neatly). Why not save the time distinction stuff for a small book, and keep the more (logically) fundamental stuff for Oxford. Mind you, I'm probably wrong and you right but this is what I think (very strongly). {new page}

Thanks for your proof of CLCMpp LCMpLp

from CLCMpp CMpLp. There was a slip of the pen: you had

1. CLCMpp CMpLp

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<sup>1</sup> Editor's note: The letter is in the Prior archive box 3 at the Bodleian Library in Oxford and has been transcribed and commented by David Jakobsen and Martin Prior.

<sup>2</sup> Editors' note: This is the most likely rendering of Smart's handwriting. Erythema Nodosum is an inflammatory skin condition that happily does not usually last too long.

<sup>3</sup> Editors' note: It is hard to see what Smart writes here.

<sup>4</sup> Editors' note: The Australian & New Zealand Association for the Advancement of Science.

<sup>5</sup> Editors' note: Martin Prior notes here that due to Mary, Martin and Ann's tuberculosis in 1954 Arthur's lectureship was deferred one year and Hao Wang took his place in 1954-55.

<sup>6</sup> Editors' note: Smart is referring to: Turquette, A. R. Review: A. N. Prior, Modality de Dicto and Modality de re . J. Symbolic Logic 20 (1955), no. 2, 167.

<sup>7</sup> Editors' note: The transcription is not certain here.

2. CL Cpq CLpLq            1 x RL = 3
3. LCLMpp CMpLp        2 p/LCMpp q/CLpLq
4. CLLCMpp LCMpLp

It should be [referring to 3]<sup>8</sup> q/CMpLp

(I only mention this for proof reading purposes in case the same slip occurs in something your [sic] publishing.)

The Prof. of medicine (strictly between him and me and you and me) doesn't think I should treat myself too much as an invalid. He thinks walks would be OK, physical jerks, etc... but probably hockey. So I'll get a little mild exercise, not enough to get tired, and my morale should rise again. (Lack of exercise always has a bad psychological effect on me!).

Thanks very much for your kind investigations with your TB expert. What he said sounds very much like what our Prof. of medicine said. Anyway I very much appreciate it.

I find the example of page 9 of Kleen difficult to get the rationale of. Call the deduction in the bottom of p. 90 'α', that on top of p. 91 β then I've grasped his proof. 1 – 17 on p. 92.

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But even so I don't quite figure it out. (Not that there are 5 groupings above corresponding to the length 5 of the deduction of p. 87).

Yours Jack

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<sup>8</sup> Editors' note: There is an arrow in the letter here.