

Arthur Prior, student journalist and public speaker: previously unknown writings in *Critic* and the *Otago Daily Times* 1934-1937

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Abstract

While at Otago University, Arthur Prior undertook student journalism, both under his own name and under his nom de plume 'Richard Bramley' in the student newspaper *Critic*. He also gave several Public Addresses for various groups that were reported in detail in the *Otago Daily Times*. This article discusses these previously undiscovered writings and addresses that provide new insight into his theological thinking at that time, as well as his involvement in the intellectual life of the university and of Dunedin. His role in the controversial 'Barthian takeover' of the Student Christian Movement (S.C.M) is also discussed.

Keywords: Arthur Prior, Karl Barth, *Critic*, Communism, Calvin, S.C.M., theology, Otago University, F.D. Maurice, Kierkegaard.

1. Introduction: Contextual overview

While Arthur Prior arrived at Otago University in 1932 there is no record of any initialized or named contribution to *Critic*, the Otago University newspaper, until July 20, 1934.¹ But, before this date, Prior was involved in student journalism via the Student Christian Movement (hereafter S.C.M.). publication *Open Windows* (and then from 1936, its relaunch as *Student*), as well as editor of the Knox College magazine *Collegian*. His move into writing for *Critic* saw Prior expanding his profile and activities at Otago University, beyond the S.C.M., philosophy and Knox College as he soon became an Associate Editor of *Critic* for two years (1935 and 1936). In this role, in 1935 Prior not only writes under his own name for *Critic* about the S.C.M., but he also writes more widely as a reporter for *Critic* under his own name as well.

In 1936 Prior's nom de plume "Richard Bramley" [used also for his writing in 'Tomorrow'] (Grimshaw 2023a) is used eight times in *Critic*, including twice under the bare initials "R.B." These are the only "R.B. contributions in *Critic* for the period Prior is at Otago (1932-1937). What is interesting is that going on the correspondence written in response, only some seem to know who Richard Bramley or R.B. are. As I have previously noted, this nom de plume would seem to have been used for writing that would be seen as problematic for Prior the theology student to be associated with publicly. Prior had also met and very quickly fell in love with Clare Hunter in June 1936 and was soon collaborating with her in work for the *Otago Daily Times*. There is a short piece "Arty Debate" (July 17, 1936) by 'Roderick Bramley' and it is possible this is Clare making use of the Bramley name. Prior may have taken on the nom de plume under the influence of Dan Davin who would occasionally write for *Critic* "social satire under the Swiftian pseudonym of Jonathan Sloe" (Ovenden, p.70); if sloe is a reference to Gin, perhaps Bramley is a reference to the very tart Bramley cooking apple? Arthur and Clare also

¹ This article is the result of a review of copies of *Critic* 1932-1937, held in the Hocken Library, University of Otago University (undertaken 3 December 2024), and further research conducted using the papers past website. I thank the Faculty of Arts, University of Canterbury, for funding the Hocken Library research as additional funding to that for attending the NZ Sociology Association conference in Dunedin, December 2024.

made use of the *nom de plume* John Everdean (Grimshaw 2018; Grimshaw 2023a) and it seems this was first tried out in *Critic* in 1937 in an article on cartoonist David Low.

The question is why was Prior so busy as Richard Bramley in 1936? He had finished his BA in Philosophy, was completing his M.A. Thesis and was a theology student. The fact that he had all this time and energy to write as Bramley could suggest that he did not find his theological studies too challenging and demanding. But also, such journalistic undertaking at this time could be seen as Prior using such writing to prepare for his stated hope of a future as a religious journalist. (Grimshaw 2018, p.93)

Critic was established in April 1925 as a fortnightly publication, funded out of student subs (Clarke, p.83; Morrell, p.145; Elworthy, p.42) replacing the rapidly declining monthly newspaper *te korero* (1922-1924) (Clarke, p. 83) and like the annual *Otago University Review* was ‘widely read in the city’. (Elworthy, p.42) This meant Prior’s writing here was always read by, and in many ways written for, more than just a student or university audience.

The Otago Prior entered as a first-year student (a fresher) was a university in change, with a new post-war student “rebellious culture” (Elworthy, p.44) emerging. As the *Evening Star* newspaper declared, under the heading “University manners”, in the wake of *Critic* adopting a new tone and format (a newspaper not a journal), including attacking the University Council and the Professorial Board, “...post-war youth has developed an impatience of discipline, a waywardness in matters of conduct unbecoming to the older generation (Elworthy, p.44; *Evening Star* 1932a) as well as noting, under the heading “Offensive Publication”:

“A tone of flippancy, and at times almost of indecency, has been the feature of recent issues of ‘The Critic,’ a publication printed in Dunedin for the Otago University Students’ Association. Till this year the students issued an excellent journal, with a similar title, in modest form, but now the publication is a registered newspaper, issued fortnightly, with a bold display of headlines, flippancy of language, and coarseness of expression that are surprising in a University paper....[the article then concluded]...Though it is a

University paper, 'The Critic' has a circulation which is not confined to the academic sphere. It is taken into homes and offices by students, and comes under the eyes of hundreds of citizens of Dunedin. It should be pointed out that there are students who have taken strong exception to the tone of the journal and who for that reason have withdrawn their subscriptions."

(Evening Star, 1932b)

The University acted swiftly, sending down the editor (a senior medical student, who was allowed to continue his clinical training outside of Dunedin), warning the publisher and reminding the President of the Otago University Students' Association (OUSA) of the association's responsibility "for the general control of the paper". (Morrell, p.148). In his history of the OUSA Sam Elworthy notes there was a decidedly political turn to student life by 1933, that expanded upon an existing post-war bohemian atmosphere "of romance, booze and jazz-filled parties" (Elworthy, p. 45) accompanied by a new mixing of male and female students. From 1933, following students serving as special constables during the 1932 riots [which Prior mentioned in "When I was a Fresher" (Prior, 1948)] student life and opinions became decidedly more political, with a leftward turn to varying degrees undertaken by many, including those writing for *Critic* (Elworthy, p.62). There was the establishment in 1932 of the left-wing debating club Public Question Union, (Elworthy, p.62) and the Independent Radical Club (Elworthy, p.63) while the S.C.M. (which Prior was deeply involved with) assisted with the Unemployed Men's Restroom in Moray Place in the centre of Dunedin. In 1935 Knox College pacifist divinity students, led by Angus Ross (a non-pacifist, non-divinity, assistant lecturer in History, and a founder of the Public Questions Union) put a motion before the Knox Church congregation asking for, in the event of war, moral support for students refusing to fight on religious grounds. This was passed, and afterwards it was reported that the Knox students said around 20% of the Otago university students were pacifists. (Elworthy, p.62); a claim that was disputed by other students, including by some at Knox College, in the city newspapers in August 1935.

One way to gain a sense of the university life Prior was entering and involved with is the novel *Not here, Not now* (Davin, 1970) by his friend and fellow student (including on *Critic*), the publisher and writer Dan Davin. Set at Otago university just before and during Prior's time, the novel includes a character Ralph Dawson clearly modelled in part on Prior. We are first introduced to Dawson when he is discussed in passing as a nomination for Intellectual Rep. for the Student Union, and described as:

"... too young and too Knox College Religious. A very nice chap of course. But someone a bit more man of the world was needed. The S.C.M. set and the Evangelical Union were rather narrow, after all, and it was important that the Intellectual rep should be someone the highbrows would take seriously." (Davin 180). The problem for Dawson as this time being "he's not well known enough to pull it off...even though the Executive has put him forward."

(Davin1970, p.178)

The change over the next year or so in Dawson/Prior is noted:

"When he first got to know him, after he joined the *Critic* staff, Ralph Dawson had still been reading theology, intending to become a minister and full of not unamusing stories of Wee Frees and Auld Lights and things like that. Since those days, though, he had taken a leftward turn and latterly was said to frequent Sandy Campbell's parties, Friends of the Soviet Union, Current Affairs Circles, and all that kind of thing."

(Davin, 1970 p.269)

Dawson turns up with Hope Turner, "one of those not bad looking but deliberately dowdy girls" with whom he'd got talking with at a "meeting of the Peace Pledge Union" (Davin, 1970 p.269). The Davin character (Martin Cody) arranges for Dawson and Turner to spend a night together at the student boarding house where Hope Turner has a room, as does Cody. He explains how they can spend the night together and then in the early morning Dawson will come to Cody's room and then use Cody's sleeping bag. Having sent the lovers off, Cody then reflects "Ralph will drop theology for keeps now, and turn over to philosophy and politics"

(Davin, 1970 p.270) and later Dawson is mentioned as someone who Cody/Davin had got “into bad habits. It was well known he’d become a red and was drinking too much.” (Davin, 1970 p.304)

As for the *Critic*, the newspaper was produced in a “little office behind Allen Hall” and regarding its material:

“What with annual general meetings, the boxing try-outs, the interfaculty sports, disgruntled correspondents, some not too laborious light verse, they shouldn’t be too short of material. As there was going to be a special meeting of the Students’ Council to discuss a projected new constitution, there wasn’t much doubt about the front page either.”

(Davin 1970, p.173).

While as an associate editor (as Prior became) noted: “After all, we practically have to be in scalding water all the time as editors.” (Davin 1970, p.174).

2. Prior in *Critic* 1934 and 1935

The first piece in *Critic* that has Prior’s name (or initials) attached to it is a long letter “So There You Are Now” appearing on July 20, 1934 (Prior 1934c). This is a reply to an article “Not A Buyer. Religious Salesmen Please Note” by W.G.N. (1934) which critiqued and rejected contemporary Christianity as “a luxury if not a nuisance”, a “sedative for the old”, an “expensive and inefficient” means of employment and “a failure” as “the answer to man’s innate desire for a simple, practical religion” (W.G.N). The article is a rejection of the claims and actions of those deemed “religious fanatics” and “the furious disciples.” (W.G.N)

Prior’s long response is interesting because in it he sets out his own religious position:

“Now, personally, I am a Christian of sorts – I’m even a hanger-on of that much-maligned body the S.C.M. – but I can make no claim to ‘possess’ Christianity, either for the purpose of keeping it to myself (As W.G.N. seems to think I ought to do), or for the purpose of dishing it out and inflicting it on chaps like him. The Christian Gospel is not anything I ‘possess’ or that he doesn’t; but is the Living Truth that possesses me—and possesses him if he’s

possessed by anything at all. The Christian Church is not an organisation to which I am pleased to affix myself, while he is pleased not to: it is the whole world in which I live and think—and in which he lives and thinks if only he'd wake up to the fact..."

(Prior, 1934c).

Prior rejects that there is such a thing as a "simple, practical religion", rejecting whether it is what he has seen of Fundamentalism or that of 'Modern and Enlightened people', and while "the Roman Catholics alone come **near** to such a religion" [emphasis in original], Prior is quick to emphasize he is not a Roman Catholic. He concludes by stating:

"Christianity is in its essence not a human practice – or human theory – but a **Divine Gift**. That this **involves** certain human practices I have no doubt; and I have little doubt as to what some of them are; but the inner connections of the business have always puzzled me; and I'd be interested to know more definitely what it all looks like to a critical outsider."

(Prior, 1934c)

He added in a PS that he hasn't "the faintest idea" if his letter "is serious or flippant", but "It's a pretty footling distinction anyway, isn't it?" to which the editor has added ("Yes, isn't it".)² (Prior, 1934c)

This is Prior's' only initialized entry in *Critic* in this year; but it is worth noting there are two articles on J.N. Finlay that would have caught his attention. These are likely to have been written by Dan Davin, who was associate editor of *Critic* and was developing a friendship with Findlay (Ovenden, p.91) who supported Davin's ambition to be a writer (Ovenden, p.84). In turn, Davin, much later, in *Not here, Not now*, based Boyce the new professor of Philosophy, on Findlay.

Findlay made the front pages of *Critic* twice in this year. The first (March 8, 1934) "Inaugural Meeting. Dr Findlay's address. The Platonic Ideal", reported Findlay's lecture "The Ideals of University Education", before a packed Allen Hall audience of the professorial board, staff and

² This editor was Ralph G. Park of the medical school (and later, a noted dermatologist, but also a writer and composer of light verse) while Dan Davin is an associate editor.

students. Findlay is reported as stating, in reference to the academy of Plato, and its preparing the mind to undertake “rational and detached examination of all possible data and to develop it to that point where it can make considered and judicious conclusions” that the aim of the modern university “is to have the mind so trained as to be able to accept or reject data” for “the forming of intelligent views. This being the aim of a University, the actual material upon which the mind is trained must work is less important.” (Critic, 1934a p.1). Findlay then emphasized that the modern university, in line with the Platonic academy, “should aim at attempting no definite philosophy but leave that to the individual whose power of judgment it develops.” The alternative is the “degradation from the ideal” as in Soviet Russia or that under an “obscene government” in Germany. This meant, in the politics of the time, “the onus on persevering it lies with the Anglo-Saxon people.” (Critic, 1934a p.1).

Critic endorsed Findlay’s address while noting “the sad gulf which lies between such an ideal and actual practice” experienced via the “obstinacy with which the spirit of commercialisation opposes the identification of the need to live with the need to think” and so while New Zealand does not face the issues facing European Universities, here “apathy and torpor are internal evils, evils more dangerous because less tangible, and so entrenched as to be almost inexpugable.” (Critic, 1934a p,2).

The second piece on Findlay appeared in August 1934 under the heading “Dr Findlay Speaks” (August 17, 1934) in which he replied to a number of questions. Of note is the following exchange:

“What do you think of the N.Z. University Syllabus in Philosophy?”

“Not very much” with a candid and disarming smile. There was not enough attention given to the history of philosophy and to Metaphysics. Our suggestion that, in Stage III. Philosophy there should be offered an opportunity to specialize in say, Logic and Psychology, rather than to study Logic, Ethics, and Psychology, seemed to meet with his approval”

(Critic, 1934b p.1).

In 1935 Prior officially joined the staff of *Critic*, being listed as an associate editor and also being recorded as both Arts Debating Secretary and Debating Secretary (these being the Faculty and University debating clubs). The first article under his name (or in this case, his initial A.N.P) is “Human Relations in Russia” (Prior 1935a), a report of the address to the leftwing Public Questions Union by Mrs Margaret Macpherson, a well-known New Zealand journalist and radio speaker who, as a Marxist, was touring New Zealand speaking on Russia. Prior’s report critiques her endorsement of the new society in Russia, suggesting it expresses unsound sentiments regarding human dignity and worth but still suggests it was a talk of a very high standard and created a good deal of discussion.

In the same issue Prior also sets out in a column what the “Student Christian Movement” (Prior, 1935b) does, but is clear to state it isn’t done so as an appeal or invitation to join the S.C.M. In making this clear, Prior expresses a somewhat contrarian attitude for one deeply involved in the S.C.M. and it is worth quoting him in detail on this:

“One may, however, if one feels so disposed, put one’s name to a printed declaration, committing oneself to active Christianity and the furtherance of the movement’s aims and objects—a procedure of which the present writer is somewhat suspicious. To balance it, perhaps somebody should get together and print cards committing the signatories to active opposition to Christianity. It’s about time there was some sort of Atheists’ or Rationalists’ Club in the University anyway.”

(Prior, 1935b)

We need to remember Prior is writing this as an enrolled Theological student and a very active member of the S.C.M.; but he is opposed to the proselytizing of the Evangelical Union and, by writing for *Critic* and acting as associate editor increasingly involving himself with the university outside of “Christian” circles, as Davin’s novel later recalls. There is, in this statement, it can be suggested, the budding philosopher in internal conversation with the budding theologian.

Prior also endorses the new version of the S.C.M. magazine *Open Windows* under the editorship of his friend and mentor Lex Miller. Prior

draws attention to the new cover stating “[a] bit of somewhat unexpected good taste and simplicity makes it look more like a student magazine, and less like the production of a Bible Class or Missionary society” (Prior, 1935b); an interesting comment seeing he was associate editor of *Open Windows* in 1934 and, in 1936 would be in charge of a series in the Bible Class magazine *Foursquare* to mark the Calvin Centenary. (Grimshaw 2018, p.44; Grimshaw, 2023c)

The difference can be seen in this comparison:

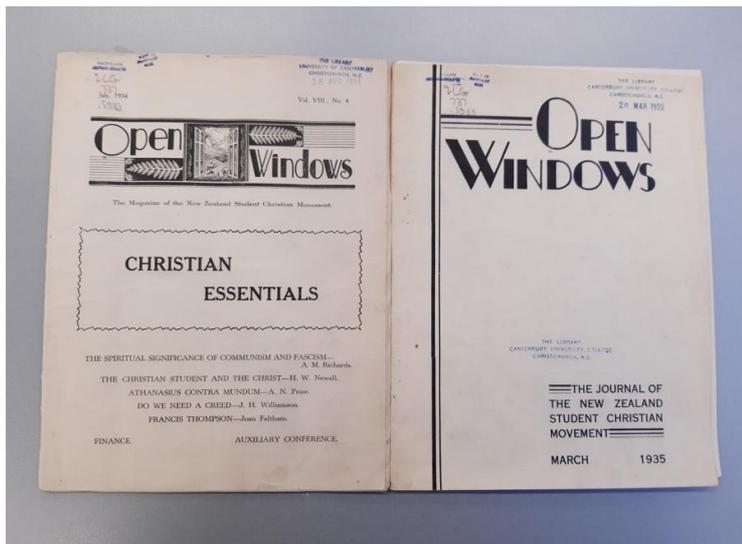


Figure1: Comparison of covers of *Open Windows*: ‘old’ version on the left and ‘new’ version on the right. Photo by Mike Gimshaw of copies held in the Macmillan Brown Library, University of Canterbury.

The report also provides a very interesting insight into not only the religious milieu of the university but also as to how Prior viewed and presented himself:

“Mr Miller, the new editor, writes in his editorial, ‘There is something very pathetic in the pose of those of those who are striving hard to maintain the role of dispassionate spectators detached in an age of enthusiasms, of fanaticisms, of passionate religiosity.’³ This is perhaps worth considering. Though we would

³ Miller’s editorial is in reference to GK Chesterton’s “About Modern Girls” originally in *Illustrated London News*, November 24, 1934 and soon to be included in

suggest considering the 'pathetic' antics of these 'critical' people, not as 'dispassionate spectators' from the outside (like Mr Miller), but as being among their number ourselves."

(Prior, 1935b).

Prior then concludes his report by noting and endorsing a "more than interesting" ongoing "controversy" in *Open Windows* in which "Dr 'Dicky' Anschuty" [sic: should be Anschutz], lecturer in Philosophy at Auckland undertakes a criticism of Christianity [he was invited to "advocate the cause of Atheism" (*Open Windows* March 1935, p.2), to which Lex Miller responds, as a series of letters; this Prior notes, being the sort of exchange that *Open Windows* has always opened its pages to. The epistolary exchange of views occurred as an ongoing series "Questions On The Christian Faith" (Anschutz and Miller, 1935).

In the same issue of *Critic* Prior also sets out "The Theology of S.C.M. Rambles", (Prior 1935c) noting that "the Theologian is not a very welcome figure in really Religious circles today"; for the preference is for evangelical attitudes and expression of what he dismisses as "a mystical or ritualistic practice of a weird new sect"; in this case his critique of the another student's "lyrical treatment of S.C.M. Rambles"(that is, walks undertaken by the S.C.M. around the Otago Peninsula). Prior's "theology" is "that the good Lord meant us to enjoy ourselves once in a while", and this includes not only having a Ramble, but also "biscuits and beer" and "Romance". (Prior, 1935c)

In May 1935 Prior contributes a column discussing the rise of pacifism among students, which includes noting "...sundry members of the movement have been permitted to plaster the cupboard in the S.C.M. room with some most startling anti-war manifestos." (Prior 1935d). While there is an intentional use of hyperbole here, it also raises the question as to whether Prior's later committed pacificism was in fact more the result

Chesterton's *As I was Saying* (1936):

http://www.gkc.org.uk/gkc/books/As_I_Was_Saying.html#XI

In his editorial is an argument for an active "Christian progress" combining neo-orthodox theology informed by "the necessity for a realistic view of the word as it is, and here it becomes necessary to face the facts of class-struggle, wage rates, the armaments race, economic privilege and, and economic distress." (Miller, 1935a)

of Clare Hunter's arrival in his life in 1936 than any underlying strong commitment? In his report Prior concentrates on the latest issue of *The Student World*, the publication of the World Student Christian Federation, which was devoted to "Our Attitude to the Next War". His focus is on a review by Visser l'Hooft of Denis de Rougemont's "Politique de la Personne"⁴ (1934) a founding document of the personalist movement that sets out the challenges for the intellectual to become involved in politics, to take a stand against the disorder of the times; that is, "we must enter into politics in order to get rid of politics." This review clearly resonated with Prior as he contextualizes it by stating it "contains matter which concerns us particularly in our peculiar position as students." (Prior 1935d)

In July Prior filed a report on the second night of the Parliamentary Debate organized by the Public Questions Union where students took the various political positions of Fascist, Conservative, Liberal, Labour, Independent Labour⁵, Douglas Credit and Communist, and which included the introduction and debate on various bills.(Prior 1935 e) And in the same issue he also reported on a talk to the S.C.M. on the political, social and economic conditions of Austria by returning pathologist Dr. Muriel Bell (Prior 1935f).

In July Prior also participated in his first Philosophical Club (run by Findlay) symposium as part of a three-way discussion on "Can We Prove the Existence of God?", that was reported in the *Otago Daily Times* (Otago Daily Times 1935a) The discussion was led-off by lecturer in English G.M. Cameron who argued for God's existence on the basis it was reasonable in that if God was thinkable then God existed and from this, that the universe and everything in it was God and God was in everything. Prior's response, as second speaker, is recorded as:

"The antithesis was taken by Mr Prior, who criticised Mr Cameron's assertion that if a thing was thinkable it existed, stating

⁴ A founding document of the personalist movement, this text (*Personal Policy* in English) advocated a Christian, democratic politics situated against both communism and fascism.

⁵ Prior would later use the nom de plume "Independent Labour" in letters to the *Otago Daily Times* in 1937.

that there was no reason to believe that what was thinkable and existence were co-extensive—still less that they were two terms for the same thing. Mr Prior further objected to Mr Cameron’s conception of God, which he designated as pantheism, a form of religion to which the Christian Church had always shown itself opposed whenever it appeared within the Church. Mr Prior was of the opinion that the existence of God was not conclusively demonstrable, but God’s existence was self-evident to faith, which was itself a gift of God.”

(Otago Daily Times, 1935a)

The concluding speaker, Dr Merrington (Master of Knox College) suggested both Cameron and Prior “had rather missed the point of the symposium, which he considered was Theism v. Atheism” and argued that God’s existence was not mathematically provable but was demonstrable and on that basis there were many people who were certain in their belief in God’s existence. It was noted that “An interesting discussion followed these papers.” (Otago Daily Times, 1935a)

Prior’s next named contribution to *Critic* was in the August 9 issue (Prior 1935g) and was a detailed review of a symposium of essays on ‘Equality’, to be published and sold in a run of seventy mimeographed copies by the Public Questions Union. This group, first affiliated to OUSA in 1932, organised regular discussions and mock parliaments and also served as a ‘front’ for the Independent Radical Club, “an influential cell” of more radical students, with about 30 members by 1935. (Clark, p.79). The collection is introduced by Professor A.G.B. Fisher, who held the Chair in Economics at the university and Prior is content to merely quote from Fisher’s set of framing questions. Of the four essays (two others being on “Civil Inequality” and “Religion and Inequality”) Prior concentrates on and endorses firstly the essay “ Political Equality” by Angus Ross (assistant lecturer in History, and Ross Fellow of Knox College) whom he describes as “a fine realist” for his questioning of the possibility of a true democracy anywhere in the current world, while suggesting “certain concrete proposals” (not listed by Prior) for democracy and political equality in New Zealand. Prior then emphasizes the importance and value of the long essay on “Economic Equality” by

his friend (once described by Prior as a “communist and anti-Christian” (Grimshaw 2018, p.108), the economics student Colin Simkin. Prior states of Simkin’s explanation for the economic roots of the most serious inequalities and of many others too, that “his suggestions for improvement seem very sane and reasonable” (Prior, 1935g), while noting how those with views like Simkin apparently suffer “derision and persecution” for their views. It is in fact unclear what these views entailed, as in a letter to the *Evening Star*, in his role as Honorary Secretary for the Public Questions Union, Simkin stated he was in fact not a communist, having a ‘vulgar prejudice and no sympathy for it’, in part because he could not “subscribe to their ultimate faith in democracy”, because he was “no believer in democracy.” (Simkin 1935) As an aside, these views did not stop Simkin being awarded the senior scholarship in economics for the University of New Zealand in 1935; also, the MacAndrew Scholar for Otago University which was awarded to the most distinguished undergraduate at Otago. Findlay also considered Simkin one of his most able students “and very much regretted Simkin’s decision to advance in economics rather than philosophy” (Hogan 1999, p.314). Simkin was not only a friend of Prior (see Grimshaw 2018) and later of Popper (Simkin, 1990) but also gave talks to the Otago Philosophy Club.

3. Prior, as Richard Bramley, in Critic 1936

In 1936, Prior continued as associate editor of *Critic*, but undertook most of his named writing under the nom de plume Richard Bramley, a name which we know he also used for other writing in the journal *Tomorrow* and in the *Otago Daily Times* from 1935-1937. (Grimshaw 2023a). We do not know why he took up this nom de plume, but it can be suggested that it was first due to his being, from 1935 a theological student (and later, in 1937 an assistant lecturer in philosophy) and so requiring a nom de plume for writing that might not be regarded as suitable for a theological student (or assistant lecturer) to be undertaking. In comparison, Prior continued writing for the S.C.M. *Open Windows* and *Student* under his own name in 1935-1936.

Prior as Bramley makes his first appearance in *Critic* in a response to an article “Science and the Supernatural” published in *Digest*, the Otago Medical School journal. (Alpha 1935). Prior begins by setting out what he sees as the issue with how Evolution is presented in the University:

“...I am not a Fundamentalist, and have no quarrel with the scientific hypothesis of evolution, natural selection, etc., on the grounds that it contradicts the first chapter of Genesis, or on any other grounds. What I do quarrel with, however is Evolution considered as itself, and [sic] cult, a religion or a substitute for religion.”

(Prior,1936a)

What has raised Prior’s ire is the article by ‘Alpha’, who is described by Prior as “a typical product of this new faith”, and Prior is moved to quote in full the final paragraph of Alpha’s article, which argues from the point of view of “an embryo scientist” so that Prior can respond and rebut it “from the point of view of ‘an embryo philosopher’.” (Prior, 1936a). Prior’s self-designation is an interesting one and must be read in tandem with his use of the Bramley non-de-plume, because at this time Prior was a theological student. It is therefore as a logician that Prior critiques “Alpha’, asking what is meant by the use of ‘explain’ and in response setting out what possible uses it may have in both what Alpha “might mean” and “does mean” by “explain”: Prior’s response is that ‘explain’ means “relating a thing to other things and showing how it came about, those other things being given”; that is “showing the **causes** of things”. This, says Prior “is Science’s job—to relate things to causes to describe phenomena more and more accurately, and particularly to describe the connexions between them more and more clearly.” (Prior, 1936a). Prior’s issue is that he sees no reason why this explanation should cause us to cease to wonder at phenomena and their cause. That is, for Prior the existence of the universe is where what he calls “True Religion” starts, as the belief in a Creator begins beyond what science can explain. Similarly, for Prior neither science nor evolution can satisfactorily explain Pain; Prior using Pain as an example of where science as explanation “does not and cannot make the slightest difference” as what is ‘explained’ is still

there (and in the case of Pain “still hurts”) and so for Prior, to seek to make a religion of science or to make it a substitute for religion violates Science’s “own true nature, quite apart from it being blasphemy.” (Prior, 1936a) What is interesting about this discussion is that while Prior as Bramley states he is writing as an “embryo philosopher” he concludes by being ‘an embryo theologian’, which is in fact suggested by his concluding endorsement of the need “for a Compartmental Mind.” (Prior, 1936a)

Prior’s next appearance as Bramley was a report in April of a Public Questions Union discussion “Can We Stop War?” (Prior, 1936b). A precis of the arguments of each of the five speakers was provided, commenting (probably ‘wearing his hats’ of Prior the secretary of both the Arts Debating Society and the Otago University Debating Society) as much on their delivery as on their content. What is of note is how Prior focused on the question of the effectiveness or otherwise of Christian pacifism, as both a position and an articulation; while at the same time critiquing the lack of clarity of the noted communist student Alexander MacLure in his attempts to express “what Communism is, how it meets the evils of Capitalism and War” (Prior 1936b). What seems to have made an impact on Prior, to the point of emphasizing this in the report, was MacLure’s position “that pacific sentiment is not enough and must find expression in an organised social way strong enough to resist the military intentions of Governments, and that the enlisting of the Trades Unions would be a realistic move.” (Prior 1936 b). It is clear from the article that Prior as Bramley was not only arguing for a Christian pacifism but also for one that was collective and aligned politically and socially, so to be able to succeed. It is therefore no surprise that later in the decade, when in Britain, Prior, as a Christian pacifist would also get involved (along with Clare) with the pacifist group PAX. (Grimshaw, 2018)

Prior seems to have had a particular issue with MacLure’s expression of what communism was and entailed, and he again critiqued this in his next “Bramley” report, this one on a Public Questions Union debate on ‘Freedom of Speech’ (Prior 1936 c) that included his friends Douglas Kennedy (future NZ Director General of Health) and fellow theology student Fred Robertson. What is interesting is the way Prior concentrated

on critiquing MacLure as perhaps knowing less about Communism than others, especially those like Robertson (MA with Honours in philosophy) who had studied at Auckland, “a university where Communism is more alive and intelligent than it is here” (Prior 1936 c); while stating of MacLure he unleashed:

“...a torrent of abuse against all states (arousing many interjected questions as to whether this included the present Russian one), and quoted the usual Communist slogans about the need for the state to ‘wither away’ before the ‘classless society’. It may well be questioned how far this last would be a real improvement and it must also be pointed out that an unrealistic Utopianism which lives by the vain dream of a world in which men will no longer need any government is always in practice, the ally of tyranny.”

(Prior 1936c)

In this report Prior as Bramley not only spends a significant degree of it critiquing MacLure but concludes by stating his own political position. It is also worth noting that Prior’s opposition to Communism and McClure occurs about a month before he meets and falls for the radical (and possible later communist) Clare Hunter.⁶

⁶ The recent expansion of the ‘papers past’ on-line archive has enabled further tracking of the movements of Clare Hunter before she arrived in Dunedin and meets Prior around the end of May 1936. We know she did not complete her degree at Canterbury University College and now know she arrived in Invercargill (near her hometown of Riverton) by 1 February 1936 to take up a role as Junior Mistress at St John’s Girls’ School. She seems to have arrived as part of a change in school leadership, along with the appointment of the ex-Principal and the ex-Senior Mistress of Amberly House school in North Canterbury. It is highly likely that Clare Hunter was a separate appointment as there is an advertisement for a Junior Mistress to begin February 1936 in both the *Southland Times* (7 and 17th January 1936), and in the *Press* (18th January 1936). The arrival of the new Principal and Senior Mistress in Invercargill, from Canterbury, is recorded in the *Southland Times* (27 January 1936) which suggests Clare Hunter was in fact already in Southland (most probably in Riverton) when she was appointed to the school; this is supported by a statement in the ‘Riverton Notes’ section of the *Southland Times* (21 February 1936) that Clare Hunter, South Riverton, has been appointed to the school. It is still unclear why she did not complete her degree at Canterbury or at Otago and why she left Christchurch for Riverton at the end of 1935. Her period at the school was a short one, with an advertisement for her role as Junior Mistress (to commence May 26) advertised in the *Southland Times* on April 8, 1936.

Prior is mentioned in the same issue of *Critic*, perhaps surprisingly, by MacLure in a long article (approximately 1500 words) entitled 'What is Communism?' (MacLure 1936a). In his opening remarks MacLure states:

"On the subject of propaganda, I consulted Mr A.N. Prior, the *Critic* writer and future parson, and so uniquely qualified as an authority. Mr Prior assures me that: "that is propaganda which has an evangelical tone". (Mr Prior is a presbyterian). On this basis, I have only to refrain from asking readers to do anything except Please turn over, and I am non-propagandist within the meaning of the Act."

(MacLure 1936a p.6)

The question arises as to whether MacLure (and others) knew that Prior was Bramley, and it would seem so given the letter written by MacLure attacking Bramley's PQU report (MacLure 1936b).

Bramley's critique of MacLure clearly stung, as MacLure writes a lengthy letter of rebuttal, not only attacking the "mis-informed" Bramley's "mistakes on Communist theory", but never mentioning Prior. MacLure states that while there is indeed a "much more capable and effective" Communist party in Auckland than in Dunedin, the same does not hold for Auckland University College (A.U.C.) in comparison to Otago University:

"At A.U.C. there is no Communist Party cell, whereas here the cell has been working for almost two years and has had considerable experience in leading the Radical Club and the Public Questions Union. If Mr Bramley still maintains that 'Communism is rather more alive and intelligent' in a College where there are no Communists, I can only submit that such a position is unintelligible to any less subtle theologian than Mr. Bramley."

(MacLure 1936b).

The extent of the communist cell at Otago University is open to conjecture; Elworthy records MacLure as "the solitary communist at the university" (Elworthy, p.64) and while Alison Clark suggests the Independent Radical Club was 'an influential cell' of about 30 more radical students by 1935, this seems different to what MacLure is claiming

exists. It would seem, from further investigation that the mathematician Harold Silverstone was also part of this cell, being named as “leader of the communists” in both daily newspaper reports (Evening Star 1936b; Otago Daily Times 1936b), while Clarke records that Silverstone, when a lecturer in the mathematics department in the 1940s was a known member of the Communist party. (Clarke, p.178) John Harris, the university librarian appointed in 1934 and friend of Arthur and Clare (see Grimshaw 2018) was at the very least a fellow traveller and rumoured to be a known communist and accused by the police of being a communist party organizer in 1934 when appointed to a Carnegie library fellowship. Harris stated his interest in communism, but also, he was not a communist party member. (Robertson, p.73). But the Priors certainly circulated in radical artistic and political circles in Dunedin 1936-1937 (see Grimshaw 2018), with, it can be suggested, Davin and then Clare moving Prior wider than just theological radical ones.

MacLure’s statement of Bramley being a theologian and that Bramley’s own ‘Unrealistic Utopianism’ could be evidenced by his membership of the League of Nations Union (MacLure, 1936b) would seem to strongly suggest MacLure and others knew that Prior was Bramley; while the tone of MacLure’s response seems very much in line with how others remember him. In his short story “The Hydra” (Davin 1947) Dan Davin gives a fictionalized account of MacLure (renamed McGregor) and his activities as the Otago University communist, including how, MacLure/McGregor was killed fighting in the Spanish civil war.

Davin’s narrator remembers MacLure/ McGregor establishing “some bloody Radical Society” in 1932 and being thrown into the university stream, the Leith, as a result. (Davin, 1947 p.98) While on the one hand the narrator admires MacLure/McGregor, he recalls: “But always McGregor seemed too vehement, slightly absurd, reducing everything to that economic jargon which interrupts like static the music of all consecutive thought, talking on universal themes in the dialect of a sect.” (Davin, 1947 pp.99-100)

There could be significant delays between an event and Prior’s published piece on it as evidenced by the appearance of his report

“Christianity and Communism” in June 1936, under the initials R.B. (Prior 1936 d). Prior, in a letter to Ursula Bethell (23/4/36) notes he has two reports for *Critic* to write: on Otago librarian John Harris on literature in New Zealand and on Archdeacon Whitehead on ‘Christianity and Communism’ (Grimshaw 2018, p.49). Reporting on Whitehead’s talk to the S.C.M., Prior begins by noting Whitehead stated Marx was “was an almost unadulterated misfortune” for the world, as both the “father of Communism” and “the grandfather of Fascism.” (Prior 1935d) Yet Whitehead does concede, Prior reports, that Marx was correct in pointing out that without economic security, the legal and political rights granted to the working class would gain little satisfaction, and that social problems can only be solved on an international basis. Whitehead—and by extension Prior, given the focus in his report—both endorse *Christian Science Monitor* correspondent William Henry Chamberlain’s *Russia’s Iron Age* (1934) for its fair handed coverage of both the achievements of Soviet Russia and its system of terrorism, espionage and internal mistreatment of its peasants and “the shocking famine engineered in 1932-33.” (Prior, 1936d) Yet Whitehead is no supporter of Capitalism either as “– he had had to put up with too many of its victims—and thought that not only justice but common sense was against it.” (Prior, 1936d), while doubting whether the disappearances of Capitalism would result in “a vast gain in happiness.” The report concludes with Whitehead’s appeal for application of Christian truths as “the hope of the world.” What is interesting here for our understanding of Prior is how similar this is to Prior’s own position in the 1930s; in fact, it can be suggested that Prior’s report of Whitehead’s talk is used as an opportunity for Prior to also advance his own position in the pages of *Critic*, given the detail of the discussion. This is also an interesting insight into the type of discussion that the S.C.M. undertook and that it was expected members would be reading widely and as interested in political and economic questions as they would be in religious ones.

Prior as Bramley next has a front-page report on the opening session of the annual Public Questions Union parliament, under the heading “The Curate’s Egg. Good in Parts” (Prior 1936 e); the reference being to the famous Punch cartoon “true humility” (1895). It’s a clever title

because not only does it allude to the famous cartoon, but also to the fact that Bramley is himself a cleric in training; yet the title deviates in an important way from the original source. In the cartoon, in response to the statement of regret that the curate has been given a bad soft-boiled egg to eat at the Bishop's table, the curate assures his host that "parts of it are excellent." Yet note how *Critic* (Prior/Bramley?) replaces "excellent" with "good", a distinction sure to be noted by many readers of *Critic*. The parliament ran for three nights and was also well reported in the local Dunedin newspapers. Students took the position of the various political parties in New Zealand (excluding the Social Credit/Douglas Credit and Democrat parties), with the Communist party being represented by MacLure and others, while there was also an intervention on the first night by a group of students representing the fascist party, this being noted in the reports published in the *Otago Daily Times* and the *Evening Star* (2 July 1936), but not mentioned by Prior in his report. Instead, he concentrates, like the newspaper reports, first on a delegation from the League of Nations Union led by Archdeacon Whitehead who argued for economic solutions both to the appeal of Communism and against nationalism, in the hope for some future pacifism; and then on a bill by the Conservative party "designed to make the Communist Party illegal." (Prior, 1936e, p.1). Prior's ongoing antipathy to MacLure and the communist party is expressed in how he (as Bramley) records "the wording of this bill appeared to satisfy no one, with the exception of **Mr. A.N. Prior**⁷ who seized every chance to read it through again" (Prior, 1936e p.1), which is not mentioned in either report in the *Otago Daily Times* or *Evening Star*. As for who Prior was representing in this parliament, with the *Evening Star* report (*Evening Star* 1936a) noting that alongside with the Labour party were "a handful of Independents" and given that we know Prior used the nom de plume "Independent Labour" in his writing to the *Otago Daily Times* in 1937, it can be confidently suggested that he was participating as an Independent in this parliament. Also, every other speaker recorded has a party affiliation after their name; that Prior does not have any party affiliation recorded

⁷ In **bold** in original, as all names were.

will further suggest he was participating as an Independent. Of further note is the ongoing antipathy towards MacLure and the communists by Bramley in his report. This certainly seems to be a clash of personalities as much as of ideologies⁸, especially as Prior was already being drawn into more radical circles with the arrival in early June of Clare Hunter in his life⁹ (Grimshaw 2018, p.61) and was more open to engagement with communist ideas and theories, while still remaining Christian and most probably a Christian socialist, strongly influenced by his friend and mentor Lex Miller.

In the same issue of *Critic* Bramley is also recorded as writing a report on an impromptu Arts faculty debate, but under the byline Roderick Bramley. This follows an unattributed report on the second debate of the Otago Debating Union in which Clare Hunter is record as participating, alongside Prior's friend Lloyd Geering. The continuing critique of MacLure in this unattributed piece seems very like that previously undertaken by Prior, while there is also the very Prior-like statement: "Nevertheless, we were impressed by the fact that when Mr MacLure cares to forget his stock of agitator's catch phrases, he can make quite a good speech." (Critic, 1936a) The article under the by-line 'Roderick Bramley' was a satirical report on a couple of impromptu debates undertaken by the Arts Faculty, perhaps as preparation for the upcoming Inter-faculty debates held in the university. Bramley's report emphasizes how underwhelmed he was by the uninspiring poor quality and shallowness of the debates, noting there were few in attendance and that the overall quality of arts faculty debating and in fact Arts faculty spirit was decidedly lacking. (Prior 1936f)

⁸ In "When I was a fresher", Prior notes "MacLure – came to S.C.M. camp –dies in Spain" (Prior 1948, p.3)

⁹ The recently expanded 'papers past' site enables us to know that on Wednesday 17 June, C. Hunter, wearing black taffeta, was among a long list of guests who attended the Knox College Winter Ball:
https://paperspast.natlib.govt.nz/newspapers/ODT19360620.2.192.1?end_date=31-12-1936&items_per_page=10&page=2&phrase=2&query=%22C.+Hunter%22&snippet=true&sort_by=byDA&start_date=01-01-1936&title=ESD%2CODT#image-tab
Arthur and Clare are also recorded as attending the Selwyn College Ball on Wednesday 8 July 1936.

What makes me think this is in fact Prior as Bramley, just with a change of first name? The first is that this is the only “Roderick Bramley” piece in *Critic* over the years 1934-1937, while at the same time there are ‘Richard Bramley’ pieces in *Critic*, *Tomorrow* and the *Otago Daily Times* (Grimshaw 2023a). Secondly, there is no other piece under ‘Roderick Bramley’ published in either *Tomorrow*, the *Otago Daily Times* or any other newspaper in New Zealand in the 1930s [as evidenced via a search of ‘papers past’]. The way the two articles are laid out on the page would also suggest both are by Bramley and the fact that Clare Hunter is a participant in the debate would suggest Prior is in the audience (and as noted, he had been Secretary of the Otago University Debating Society and the Arts faculty Debating Society). The report also noted the Selwyn College ‘Shipwreck’ Winter Ball was the night before and we know Arthur and Clare attended this, as they had the earlier Knox College Winter Ball in June. Finally, as noted, the focus on MacLure is similar to other Bramley pieces in *Critic*. So why then ‘Roderick’ not ‘Richard’ Bramley. I suggest it is because the Arts faculty debate piece is very satirical in tone and so a ‘different Bramley’ has to be used as nom de plume, to differentiate it from the more serious Richard Bramley pieces.

A Bramley piece we can be certain is by Prior is the long article “John Calvin. Centenary celebrations” (Prior 1936g) that appeared on July 31, 1936; to be followed the next day by his shorter Bramley on Calvin piece “The Rediscovery of Calvin” in the *Otago Daily Times* (Grimshaw 2023a, Grimshaw 2023c). Prior was also editor for a series on Calvin in the Bible Class *Four Square* magazine at this time (Grimshaw 2018, p.44) as well as writing an essay on Calvin for the *Otago University Review* essay competition, winning third prize (Grimshaw 2023c). Each of his three Calvin pieces is quite different in focus and are part of a detailed interest in Calvin that stretched as far back as at least to 1931 and continued for at some years (Grimshaw 2018, Grimshaw 2023c).

In his *Critic* article, Prior focuses his discussion on two areas: “Calvin’s Influence on Education” and “Calvin and Freedom”. Prior emphasizes that the centenary is not just of ecclesiastical interest as Calvin’s “influence on the world at large, and particularly on the word of thought,

brings this centenary well with the concern of the University also.”¹⁰ (Prior 1936g) Prior writes of Calvin’s stress on the importance of an educated ministry and links this to the Presbyterian church endowing chairs at Otago university. He compares this to the ongoing failure of the Christchurch presbytery to get a professor of Philosophy appointed to Canterbury College (a position Prior was later to hold). Prior then positions Calvin as an important bulwark versus ‘big business’ on the one hand and on the other “the crowds of pious sectarians and cranks who are forever burbling about their Personal Religion”, or as he notes, in contemporary forms, the Buchmanites or Oxford Group Members. (Prior 1936g) Prior then argues for the importance of Calvin for freedom of thought, here not only attacking “Alpha” who he earlier crossed swords with in *Critic* (Prior 1936a), but also the limits of Marxism for properly countering the influence of economic forces on freedom of thought. He concludes by arguing for the importance of the Calvinist Church in challenging Hitler, (Prior 1936g) here aligning with his *Otago Daily Times* article that has a central focus on the importance of the Calvinist, Confessional church in opposing Hitler. (Prior 1936h)

This is an important article by Prior, not only for his discussion of Calvin, but also because it sets out his evolving thinking on education, religion, freedom and Marxism. Prior is developing his independent line of thought, but also importantly undertaking a significant step forward in his intention, as written to Ursula Bethell (26 July 1936) to become, with Clare, a free-lance writer in England, as well as perhaps ending up “as the editor of a religious periodical”. (Grimshaw 2018, p.93). What is clear is that ‘Richard Bramley’ was also being used by Prior to help develop a new persona and voice as a writer, not just an existing one as a student or even a student journalist. Just like his writing in *Tomorrow* under the Bramley by-line, Prior is here having to write for a wider audience than his previous—and continuing—writing for the S.C.M. in *Open Windows* and then *Student*.

The final piece by Prior under the Bramley nom de plume (or at least initials of ‘R.B’) was his much delayed report on Otago University

¹⁰ The “former O.U.S.A. President” mentioned in this piece is Rev. H.A. Mitchell, Prior’s Minister at Roslyn Presbyterian Church.

Librarian John Harris' talk on 'Literature in New Zealand' to the Literary society, which Prior originally wrote in late April (Grimshaw 2018, p.49; p.51) and finally appeared on September 11 1936 (Prior,1936i). Harris' talk was an iconoclastic one, which Prior obviously agreed with, beginning by stating Harris' observation:

"...that there is really **no** 'literature' in New Zealand, though there are promising signs of a beginning. For this situation to be remedied, and real literature of our own to grow up, we need not so much a change in what is written as change in our whole attitude to what is written."

(Prior, 1936i)

Prior then reports on Harris' contrast between "the second rate and unoriginal New Zealand writing that is most talked about by our public, and the really promising efforts which are being in the whole neglected." (Prior 1936i). Of particular note is how Harris, and by extension Prior, include in the discussion "the little-known **"Evelyn Hayes"**, [and] her small volume of **'Verse from a Garden in the Antipodes'**" and her poems published in the Christchurch *Press*. (Prior, 1936i). Evelyn Hayes was the pen-name of Ursula Bethell and it is interesting that although Prior includes two references to his report of Harris's talk in his letters to Bethell (Grimshaw 2018 p.49, p.51) he does not mention Harris' endorsement of her work. However, given that he often sent clippings of interest to Bethell (Grimshaw 2018) he might have wished to surprise her, or, given the way he mentions Harris at various times in his letters to her, Bethell very likely might have included Harris in her circle of influence, especially as Harris had attended the Anglican private school Christ's College in Christchurch, was the grandson of the school's third headmaster, twice taught there and founded the literary discussion Kit-Kat club¹¹.

With this last piece, Prior not only stops using 'Richard Bramley' for any writing in *Critic*, but he also stops writing for *Critic* altogether. In 1937 Prior, having completed his M.A. thesis, was appointed by Findlay

¹¹ see: <https://christcollege.com/ccoba/about/the-john-harris-memorial-collection>

for a year as an assistant lecturer in philosophy at Otago University and so, not surprisingly, his contributions to *Critic* effectively ceased. As well as teaching, he was also working in what would be his first published academic paper, “The Nation and the Individual” (Prior, 1937a). He did continue to use the pseudonyms ‘Richard Bramley’ and ‘Independent Labour’ for letters to the *Otago Daily Times* (Grimshaw, 2023a) and as we will discuss later, reports of his public talks (probably written up by Clare) were published in that paper in 1937. However, the one contribution to *Critic* we can be certain he was involved with, in some fashion, is the article in March 1937 on the cartoonist David Low, credited to ‘John Everdean’, (Prior, A.N. & Prior, C., 1937) the pseudonym used by Arthur and Clare for joint efforts. (Grimshaw 2018; Grimshaw 2023); two others appearing over this time in the *Otago Daily Times* (Grimshaw 2023). This piece on David Low is a lengthy introduction and endorsement of Low as a cartoonist, but equally so for his politics, with ‘John Everdean’ noting Low’s “radical politics” and his attacks on “militarism and imperialism”; while it is stated “Low is challenging, and the presentation of his radical views appears too much for sensitive little New Zealand”, and “perhaps he is too radical for our conservatism”. (Prior, A.N. & Prior, C., 1937) The reason for the article is to draw attention to “a man as great in his own sphere as Rutherford [who] has passed unnoticed in his own land, although his name is a household one throughout Europe.” (Prior, A.N. & Prior, C., 1937). The probable origin for this article was a forthcoming 60-slide illustrated lecture on Low, to be given by Prior’s uncle John Brailsford to the Dunedin W.E.A. on March 17, 1937 (*Otago Daily Times*, 1937), with the mayor of Dunedin presiding. In fact, in comparing the content of the ‘John Everdean’ article and the reports of Brailsford’s lecture in the *Evening Star* and the *Otago Daily Times* there are some very striking similarities in focus and phrasing, it being clear that Arthur and Clare were strongly influenced by discussion with Brailsford and seeking, via *Critic* to stimulate interest in the talk; however, the newspapers report there was only a small crowd in attendance. Perhaps the Priors were right in their assessment of New Zealand conservatism?

4. Prior, Barth and the S.C.M.

No discussion of Prior at this time would be complete without including a discussion and analysis of how his Barthianism was both expressed and responded to. Therefore, of interest to our understanding of Prior at Otago university is a critique of the S.C.M. issued in August 1936, as part of a wider critique of Otago university activities and groups, under the front-page headline in *Critic* "Reform is needed" (Critic 1936b). We know not only that it was not written by Prior because of the content, but it was written against Prior and his theological cohort because of its critiques. Prior is certainly one of those singled out as being among the "certain individuals" who having felt the S.C.M. "needed a theological cleaning up" did not do so by "dishing up simple, straight-forward theology such as is contained in Dr. Dickie's 'Organism of In Truth'" [sic: the proper title being *The Organism of Christian Truth*], a theology it claimed "all would have understood." Instead, what was introduced is dismissed and critiqued as "the ghastly mistake of dishing up the obscure theology of Karl Barth". (Critic,1936b) It is clear that at least two of these individuals accused are Lex Miller and Arthur Prior; and we know that in 1934 Prior noted in the S.C.M. journal *Open Windows* that his "pet idea" was the theology of Karl Barth (Prior, 1934b, p.22); while a report in the *Student* (4 1936) on the 1936 Otago S.C.M. camp at Pounaweia, noted there was "a Barthian heckling meeting led by Arthur Prior." (Grave, 1936, p.19). It can also be suggested that Prior's position regarding MacLure was in part influenced, or at least reinforced, by such *Open Windows* articles as J.D. Salmond's detailed comparative critique "Karl Marx v. Karl Barth" (Salmond 1932) that appeared under the editorship of Lex Miller. Salmond (1898-1976) [widely known as 'Fish' even 30-plus years later] was Assembly Youth Director and lecturer in religious education at the Theological Hall, Knox College, and argued for Barth over Marx, yet still noting six points of agreement between Marx's political religion of communism and Barth's Christian neo-orthodox theology (a new social order based on social justice; a belief in world-wide missionary propaganda; unshaken belief in their message; an absolute system claiming to be **the** way; belief in social service; personal sacrifice, and absolute individual loyalty to the cause; a belief in an apocalyptic coming

of the kingdom on earth—just by different means) and six points of difference.(Salmond, p.14). The basis of the S.C.M.'s focus on Barth can be summarized in Salmond's concluding statement:

“Barth is facing up to the challenges which confront Christianity on every hand—from Communism to Nationalism and the many other “isms” of our day. He is pointing Christians to those basic truths which gave Christianity driving power in the days of Paul and Luther.”

(Salmond, p.16).

Similarly, Lex Miller, writing in *Open Windows* in 1935 stated “the real answer to Communism is the theology of Karl Barth” (Miller 1935b, p.3) and it probably also drove Prior's response to MacLure.

The turn to the theology of Karl Barth in New Zealand Presbyterianism, and then by extension into the S.C.M. is discussed by Martin George Holmes¹² who identifies the central role of the Presbyterian journal the *Outlook* as paving “the way for a popular and thoughtful reception of Barth” in New Zealand (Holmes, p.108), from 1931 via the writings of noted Presbyterian minister and church leader James Gibb, followed in May 1931 by a three-part interpretation of Barth by J.T.V. Steele (Holmes, pp.118-119), soon to establish, with Bates, the *New Zealand Journal of Theology* [NZJT] that Prior read and wrote for (Grimshaw. 2023b) and by writing by Ian Fraser (who was also involved with the NZJT). (Holmes, pp.117-121). If the *Outlook* and then the NZJT helped drive Barth reception in New Zealand, just as important, yet not discussed by Holmes, is the role of the S.C.M. and its journals *Open Windows* and *Student*, which Prior was deeply involved with, along with his mentor and fellow Barthian Lex Miller.

It appears that it was in 1934 that Miller and Prior instituted what has been called the Barthian takeover of the SCM. In March 1934, in his editorial “*Open Windows* and ecclesiasticism” (Prior 1934a) Prior notes the importance of Barth for ensuring what Prior terms “the independent authority of the Catholic church”(Prior 1934a). The editorship of the S.C.M. journal gave both Miller and Prior an important avenue to champion Barthian theology and crisis/neo-orthodox theology more generally; much of it directed not only against the competing Buchamanites of the Oxford Movement, but also against more traditional

¹² Holmes makes use of my articles on Prior: (Grimshaw 2023b; Grimshaw 2023c)

theological liberalism. We need to remember that Barth and the wider crisis theology of neoorthodoxy was viewed as radical, contemporary, and as a Christian political theology undertaken to stand against both communism and fascism; it also was linked into continental thought and so viewed as intellectually rigorous and an important accompaniment to philosophy.

The earliest official discussion I can discover of Barth at an S.C.M. conference is at the 1933-1934 Geraldine summer conference where Dr Ian Fraser gave a morning address on Karl Barth. Fraser had recently returned to New Zealand from three years post graduate study in Britain [New College and Edinburgh], Europe (under Barth) and New York [at Union Theological Seminary). As Holmes recounts in his discussion, Fraser was

“...probably the New Zealander who understood it best. As he recalled in his autobiography, “I had been in Bonn perhaps six weeks when suddenly I saw what Barth was getting at. It came like a flash, as I saw it all from his point of view.” (Fraser 1992, p.15) This theological epiphany was not lost on those around him. When he left Germany to study with John Baillie at Union Theological Seminary in New York, “Dr Baillie and the other members of staff ... accepted my understanding of Barth to be authoritative.” (Fraser 1992, p.15) (Holmes 120-121)

That Barth was having an impact at Otago University is noted in an editorial in the *Otago Daily Times* on “Hitlerism and the churches” (Otago Daily Times 1934) in which Barth is described as “well known and acceptable to many serious students at Otago University”; while in his Moderator’s address to the Presbyterian General Assembly, Professor Dickie in November 1934 endorsed the importance of Barth, this being widely reported in depth across New Zealand’s newspapers.

At the S.C.M. level, the Barthian move seems to have really occurred at the national conference, held at Oamaru over the summer of 1935-1936. Prior wrote a report of the conference for the S.C.M. journal *Student* and begins by stating “The most obvious feature of the intellectual life of the Conference was the invasion of the S.C.M. by ‘Barthianism’, particularly in the person of its most vigorous champion, the Rev. H.J. Ryburn”. (Prior, 1936j p.7). As Prior goes on to note: “Those who have attended Conferences in the past few years will realise something of this kind has been brewing for some time and that the Barthian challenge to the S.C.M.

was made at the right moment"; what was "unexpected" was the positive reception it received, or rather, few seemed prepared to defend 'liberalism' against such an attack. (Prior, 1936j p.7) Rather, "[t]here seemed to be a quite general and genuine dissatisfaction with theological liberalism and a readiness to hear what the 'Barthians' had to put in its place", with opposition mostly coming "from those whose first interest was more centred on the experience of religious conversion." (Prior, 1936j, p.7).

As an aside, the impact of Barthianism on this conference is demonstrated by a post-conference climbing party, naming an unmade, previously unclimbed mountain in the Southern Alps of New Zealand 'Mt. Barth' in his honour, with another peak (Mt. Heim) and a glacier (the 'Thurneysian') being also named in honour of the school of Barthian theology.

Prior's S.C.M. conference report was followed by a lengthy, detailed (and unattributed¹³) discussion of the position of the Confessing Church and Barth in Germany (Student, 1936a) and also by Prior's book review column "A Shelf of Books" in which he notes the copious number of books connected with Barthianism and so recommends "three books which have a distinctly 'Barthian' flavour, but are written by men who are not just 'expounders' of Barthianism and are not even essentially 'followers of Barth', but have distinct and valuable contributions of their own to make to the Barthian circle of discussion." (Prior, 1936k p.17). The books are Roy McKay's *The Pillar of Fire*; Sir Edward Hoskyns' *The Riddle of the New Testament*; and H.H. Kelly's *The Gospel of God*. These recommendations demonstrate that Prior's Barthianism was part of a wider theological reading and discussion.

In the next issue of *Student*, Prior, in a letter on 'The S.C.M. and Prayer', both widens and focuses the discussion by stating "I would suggest, tentatively, that at this present juncture **the most significant cleavage in our N.Z.S.C.M. is not between, say, 'Liberals' and 'Barthians' but between those who find the fountain of the Christian life in 'Faith' and those who find it in 'Prayer'** [emphasis in original] (Prior, 1936l). Prior positions himself and Barth on the side of Faith, not prayer; while observing:

¹³ This suggests it was a reprint from another international S.C.M. publication. Such reprints were common.

“Personally, I tend to find the second group—the ‘Prayer’ group—profoundly intolerant (always making reflections upon the ‘spirituality’ of the rest of us, trying to drag us to devotional circles, and insisting that the last are ‘central to the life of the S.C.M.,’ and so forth; while they, no doubt, tend to find the like of myself confoundedly lacking in consideration for their religious sensibilities.”

(Prior, 1936l).

This in turn set off a series of letters on Prayer (see Grimshaw 2018, p.76, n.27 for detail) and helps us understand why there was such anti-Barthian antipathy rising in some sectors of the S.C.M, and in wider Christian circles at Otago university. The specific origins of Barthianism in the Otago S.C.M. are identified by Lex Miller as occurring at the Otago S.C.M. camp at Pounaweia in 1932 “with startling results in that camp itself and important results to the movement as whole”(Miller, 1936), with studies at the 1936 camp drawing on the recent translation of Barth’s *The Doctrine of the Word of God*. (Miller, 1936). 1932 was Prior’s first year at Otago and it is highly probable that he attended this camp, was introduced to Barthianism and this in turn helped drive his conversion from Methodism to Presbyterianism (Prior, 1948). It is as yet unclear who introduced Barthian thinking to this camp, but as Holmes (2024) has observed, there was certainly Barthian discussion and debate occurring in the wider Presbyterian church at this time.

The division in the S.C.M. was thought worthy of mention in the report of the NZ S.C.M. presented to the World S.C.M. conference in 1936; noting a number of times the impact of the “Barthian emphasis”, (Student, 1936b p.10) and “the impact of continental theology” and stating “the last three years has seen a feeling of need for a deeper, a more Scriptural, theology, and many have found great help in the ‘continental’ emphasis, the ‘theology of crisis’.(Student,1936b p.10). There is however recognition that “it would not be unfair to say that we are just now in the midst of a battle between the ‘American’ and the ‘continental’ ways of thought.” (Student,1936b p.10). The report (most probably written by Lex Miller) further discussed how this “move from liberalism in theology” has been accompanied by a move “towards realism in sociology” that has seen” a growing appreciation of the deep-seated economic causes” of issues and challenges in the world. (Student,1936b p.10). The challenge for many in the S.C.M. is set out clearly, and it is certainly a challenge that

Prior was in turn seeking an answer to in his writing across various outlets:

“The increasing grasp of the realities of class-antagonism has led to an attempt to discover some Christian way of action which will neither align itself with the status quo nor seek to change it by violent revolutionary action.”

(Student, 1936b p.11).

The report on the Otago S.C.M. Pounaweia camp of 1936 (written by one of the Barthian mountain climbing party), made specific mention and focus on the influence of Barthianism, not just in “the Barthian heckling meeting’ led by Prior (Grave, p.19) but also in how “Barth haunted the camp. He got up in the morning, maybe a bit late for breakfast, and never went to bed til late at night. His presence was all-pervasive.” (Grave, p.18). What is important to note is the statement that the camp was the continuation of the Barthian turn of the S.C.M. conference and its foundation in *The Cross and the Resurrection*, Ryburn’s study book prepared for the conference.

Prior continued his promotion of Barth to the S.C.M. with a review endorsing (Thomson’s translation of) Barth’s *The Doctrine of the Word of God*, in issue 6 of *Student* (Prior, 1936m). Given Prior was both a theological student and a philosophy student, it is of note that he emphasizes that philosophical proofs of the existence of God, along with “attempting to overthrow the presuppositions of modern secularism and unbelief”, are for Barth not a possible “ ‘lead in’ to theological territory from ‘outside.’” (Prior, 1936m). Prior spends the review carefully delineating and defining Barth’s position, his theology and, in his final statement, his theologising, stating:

“...there is no ‘way in’ to the word of revelation from the world outside it; and it is only when the Word of God has already overtaken us, we know not how, that we can even begin ‘theologizing’.”

(Prior, 1936m)

In this statement, Prior is also making clear his own theological position and the basis of his Barthian-style conversion from Methodism to Presbyterianism.

4. Prior's public talks 1936-1937

The third element of Prior's activities I want to discuss are the newspaper reports of his public talks. It is important for us to remember that Prior was, from his first article "Praise and Prayer" in *Open Windows* in March 1933 (Prior 1933) and in long letters to *Open Windows* (Prior 1932a, Prior 1932b), undertaking the role of a theological public intellectual. These newspaper reports of his public talks expand the audience for Prior and were most likely the work of Clare who had secured a reporter's job with the *Otago Daily Times*¹⁴ (Grimshaw. 2018)

In 1936-1937 Prior was involved in a student and clergy body called the Friends of Reunion Movement, a little known, short-lived discussion and study group that was interested in "the Continental revival of Reformation theology" and in the "'classic' divines of the Church of England and Rome." It seems to have been strongly influenced by Rev. H.J. Ryburn's study book *The Cross and the Resurrection of Jesus Christ* prepared for the 1935-36 S.C.M. annual conference, which created "vigorous expression". (*Otago Daily Times*, 1936c). There are reports of seven meetings conducted by the group between July 1936-May 1937; and Prior addressed two of them. Other discussions were led by his friends Fred Robertson, Colin Simkin, Ian Dixon and also by H.J. Ryburn who spoke on 'Church Disunity'. These all received detailed write ups in the *Otago Daily Times*. Prior's two contributions¹⁵ are on "Creeds of the Church" (Prior, 1936n) and a comparison of F.D. Maurice and Karl Barth (Prior, 1936o). Prior's address on the Creeds appears to have been the inaugural study presented. He stated the Apostles' Creed, the Nicene Creed and the Creed of St Athanasius were regarded by the Church of England as "an essential part of the basis of any union schemes", while at the same time observing "Presbyterianism, by contrast, appeared to regard them more critically than Anglicanism." He then noted the

¹⁴ As Prior wrote to Bethel (14/9/36) "Clare has been getting in a great deal of first-rate column-length reports of late" (Grimshaw 2018, p.94) and the topics and speakers listed by Prior occur in the *Otago Daily Times* across 1936, including those of W.E.A. lectures.

¹⁵ I have included these in the bibliography as public addresses by Prior given the detail and the extensive quotes contained within them.

influence of the Apostles Creed on the Reformed churches was observable by

“...the fact that any outstanding Presbyterian system of dogmatic theology, from Calvin’s ‘Institutes’ to Karl Barth’s new ‘Church Dogmatics’ and Principal Dickey’s ‘Organism of Christian Truth’ seemed inevitable to fall into the sections given by the various parts of the Apostles’ Creed.”

(Prior,1936n)

After disusing the structures of the three Creeds, Prior then observed that the Creeds were not necessarily “‘oecumenical’ that was as expressing the mind of the Church Universal”, noting the differences expressed by the Eastern Church, such as with prior in the western form the Nicene Creed, the procession of the Holy Ghost from the Father and the Son, (which he agreed with) was rejected in the Eastern. He also supported the creation of certain new confessional statements such as “the Scots Confession of 1560...some of the utterances of the Confessional Church in Germany to-day, and...the new ‘Short Statement of the Church’s faith’ produced by the Church of Scotland”. He emphasized none these “contemplated a revision of the Apostles’ or the Nicene Creed.” (Prior 1936, n) Prior’s interest in church union and its theological implementations of Creedal statements continued into the 1950s, even when he was primarily a philosopher, as seen in his columns as Naphthali in the *Outlook* (Grimshaw 2025a).

Prior’s other address to the Friends of Reunion movement was a comparison between F.D. Maurice and Karl Barth. (Prior 1936o) This is not surprising because in his letters to Bethell (Grimshaw 2018) Prior made many mentions of Maurice, perhaps because he was planning this comparison [which is not mentioned in the letters]. He began by stating that if fundamentalists quickly came to oppose Barth, comparing him to "Satan clothed as an angel of light" having first hailed him ‘as a kindred spirit’, then ‘Modernists’ would do so regarding Maurice, but only “if he had been as widely read as he deserved to be.” What Prior observes is that while it might be possible for a closer comparison to see similarities between Maurice “as nothing more nor less than a cleverly-disguised

Barthian" and Barth (Prior 1936o), in actual fact the distance between them is more than what is seen to be more in common. For Prior, Maurice lacks the "set of theological opinions" that could be considered to constitute 'Barthianism', which as expressed by Prior, align at a fundamental level with "what Kierkegaard had called 'the infinite qualitative difference between time and eternity, between God and man'." (Prior, 1936o) But, continued Prior, it could be argued that "the two theologians were at one in their idea as to the ground theology should cover and the way in which theological opinions should be reached." (Prior, 1936o)

Prior's argument was that Barth and Maurice were not in contradiction with each other but rather Barth is the converse of Maurice and vice versa. That is, both were as "equally sensitive" to "the currents of thought" of their own time as well as "insistent on the divine and eternal origin of Christianity". Prior then explains why he is so interested in Maurice (as seen in Grimshaw 2018):

"Maurice, in short, seemed to be definitely at one with Barth in rejecting the conventional division of theological disciplines into 'Apologetics' or 'Natural Theology', 'Dogmatics' or 'Revealed Theology', and 'Christian Ethics'. More positively also his works seemed to fall quite naturally into the divisions which Barth suggested in their place—Exegetical, dogmatic and practical theology. Both on this account and on others Maurice seemed to the speaker to be almost the only Anglican who had either grasped what regular theology ought to be or sought to produce it, and hence almost the only Anglican who was entitled to be described as a "theologian."

(Prior 1936o)

The difference between the two arose in their response to the centrality of the fall or the redemption, the issue being, said Prior, was that Maurice had misunderstood the motive of the Scottish reformers that resulted in the 1560 Confession. Prior was then reported as stating:

"Maurice was fundamentally more conservative by temperament, more attached to old and traditional ways, than Barth: and had only appeared to be "radical" in an age—the Victorian age—which had

set up novel conventions of its own, and for some strange reason regarded them as having been laid down from the beginning of time.”

(Prior 1936o)

Prior’s conclusion was that that “Maurice had been typically Anglican rather than Calvinist in being more interested in forms of worship than in confessions of faith.” (Prior, 1936o)

This report of Prior’s address is an important addition to our understanding of his theological interests and thinking and helps explain the attraction that Barth and Calvinism held for Prior, and it is suggested, helps explain why in the end Prior was able to continue as a Presbyterian even as he was first a philosopher and then a logician. That is, his approach to Christianity and in fact to theology was intellectual, not emotive; his Christian community was, at root, an intellectual Christian community, hence the S.C.M., not a pietistic or traditionalist one, hence his strident opposition to the Oxford Groupers. Barth, and by extension Calvin, was for him far more modern and radical than alternative forms of Christianity.

In 1937 Prior was also participated in a Philosophical Club study on Kierkegaard alongside Seacliff asylum medical superintendent Dr Stuart Moore. Prior provided a historical overview of Kierkegaard, noting his influence on Unamuno, de Rougemont, Barth, and the German Confessional Church, Heidegger and Herbert Read, while stating “there was much in the tradition of Scottish Presbyterianism” which saw Kierkegaard “seriously studied rather earlier than in some other countries”. (Prior,1937b)

The report of Prior’s subsequent discussion is worth recording in full because it gives a clear insight into how Prior, at this stage, attempted to balance his philosophical and theological thinking:

“In attempting to interpret Kierkegaard to a **philosophical club**, it might have seemed the best procedure to concentrate on those features of his thought which were of direct interest to the philosopher. Such a line of approach would, however, have been misleading, for Kierkegaard’s contributions to philosophy proper, important as they might be, had not been central to his own thinking, and as often as not had been introduced merely in order to attract attention to his main theme. One of Kierkegaard’s most

violent antipathies had been the practice of turning the key events of Christianity, such as the death of Christ, into mere symbols of profound philosophical truths. Kierkegaard had regarded it as his fundamental mission to 'show his age what it meant to be a Christian', and to oppose himself to the travesty, of Christianity which was current in his time. He had set himself in violent opposition to everything that was regarded as most 'enlightened' and 'reasonable' in the Christian thought of that day. The philosophically unattractive character of his Christianity needed to be particularly stressed. Philosophers, and cultured men in general, were prepared to give serious consideration to such matters as 'the principle of sacrifice'; and even Roman Catholicism had a certain dignity and impressiveness which often enabled it to command the attention of educated people. Kierkegaard's one real concern, however, had been salvation by the blood of Christ. His Christianity had been an almost unbelievably narrow form of Protestantism, which it would always be impossible to discuss in a "**Philosophical Club**" without feeling and causing embarrassment. Kierkegaard, however, was no vulgar revivalist. The important thing about the embarrassment which he created was that it was quite inescapable. The educated man could evade the embarrassment caused by the revivalist by laughing at it, but it was not possible to laugh at Kierkegaard; nor did he himself feel at any more at ease in God's presence than, those whom, he addressed. According to him, men were 'always in the wrong in relation to God', and all his passion and all his philosophical acumen had been devoted to maintaining this position and this attitude."

(Prior, 1937b)

There are two final references to Prior in *Critic* in 1937, and they involve him addressing the literary society. On July 2 1937 (*Critic* 1937a) it is announced that Prior will speak on "the Russian Novelists" at the July 12 meeting; however the report of this address sees Prior speaking on quite a different topic. Prior was recorded as having given a talk in July 1936 that "dealt with the James brothers, and introduced Lewis Carroll, the versatile author of 'Alice in Wonderland'" in a clever paradox of 'Achilles and the tortoise.' After discussing the meaning of literature [Prior] concluded by urging more investigations by students

themselves.” (Critic, 1937b). However, the far more detailed report in the *Otago Daily Times* (Prior, 1937c) sets out a far more substantial address delivered by Prior.

Prior’s discussion arose in relation to a theory put forward by the university librarian John Harris that there was an “entirely artificial” distinction between ‘fine’ writing and ‘technical’ writing. This occurred in a lecture on ‘Scientific Literature’ by Harris as part of the W.E.A. series on “The Writer and Society”; the column-length report of this lecture (most probably written up by Clare), giving a detailed account of his argument. (Harris, 1936) It seems clear that Prior was in attendance and decided to later put forward his own views on the issue.

While Prior “was not in entire agreement” with Harris, he did “wish to discuss the important truth that lay behind it.” That is, he proposed that literature and perhaps art, in general “had two main aims, one being to give artistic enjoyment and the other to improve the mind.” (Prior, 1937c) Fine writing was aligned with artistic enjoyment while the role of technical writing was that to improve the mind. It was in relation to this that he discussed the James brothers and Lewis Carrol. That is, William James wrote on psychology like a novelist and Henry James wrote novels like a psychologist, a similar division being observed by G.K. Chesterton regarding the Huxley brothers. Lewis Carrol possessed, said Prior, a “dual personality”, writing textbooks on logic and mathematics as well as his stories for children; but Prior stated, the story writer could be detected in the textbooks.

Prior’s argument was that to gain real insight, one should read “both a scientific analysis and something more like a story.” (Prior, 1937c) Prior also discussed the difference between books that enlarged the mind and those that were read, giving as example the current interest by “very many people” in books “on the relation between science and philosophy.” He noted the most widely read “contained very incompetent philosophy, and were of the most meagre value educationally”; and while the works of A.N. Whitehead “were philosophically illuminating,” they were written “in a very obscure style” and this meant they “were much less widely read for a perfectly understandable and justifiable reason”. (Prior 1937c) Prior endorsed the

work of C.D. Broad, as it “embodied first-rate philosophical thinking and at the same made delightful reading; yet these were the least read of all.” (Prior, 1937c)

Prior’s critique of reading habits then expanded to those of “many other spheres” observing that the issue in the philosophy of science occurred elsewhere, leading him to state “the only conclusion that could be drawn was that the general public has really no deep-rooted desire to improve the mind, at least not beyond certain fairly well-defined limits”, and this “deplorable” attitude “was most deplorable of all in student circles” where “it very largely prevailed.” (Prior, 1937c)

In what we can sense is the assistant lecturer speaking, Prior stated there was very little enthusiasm in the average student “for learning and inquiry for their own sakes”, an expression of the wider world where in many places “the spirit of learning and inquiry had to fight for its existence”. His conclusion was that “the best kind of agitation for “academic freedom” was “not that which sprung from a dogmatic theoretical liberalism or from a dogmatic theoretical communism, but that which grew out of the determination to pursue the learning and inquiry that was the essential task of students.” (Prior, 1937c) Given all of this, it is perhaps not surprising that *Critic* provided a very brief and perfunctory precis of his address.

The Priors soon left for Europe and Britain and from 1938-1940 undertook three years of “bohemian wandering” (Copeland 2022) and, in fact, that hoped-for ‘religious journalism’. (Grimshaw, 2018). Prior continued this form of activity, in various forms well into the 1950s upon his return to New Zealand at the end of the 1940, even when employed as a philosopher. (Grimshaw 2020; Grimshaw 2025a; Grimshaw 2025b)

5. Conclusion

A review of Prior’s student writing and addresses makes clear the degree to which he undertook the role of theological public intellectual; a position strongly informed by his Barthianism. Yet it is also clear from his reporting in *Critic* that he was learning his craft, seeking the skills and practice that he felt would enable that hoped for career as a religious journalist once his life dramatically changed with the arrival of Clare Hunter; yet as Davin suggests, Clare Hunter encountered a Prior already

on the move into a wider social and political experience of Otago University, not just that primarily defined by Knox College and the S.C.M. But Prior was also continuously seeking to balance the theologian and the philosopher, something that perhaps Barthianism both demanded and enabled, given its deep roots into continental thought. In many ways Prior at this time was beginning to embody a Barthian point of view and advice to young theologians (arising in the 1920s) that became famous when reported in *Time* magazine in 1963: "...take your Bible and take your newspaper, and read both. But interpret newspapers from your Bible." (Time,1963). Prior's personal response, as a student journalist, would seem to have been: 'take your Barth and Bible and take your newspaper, and read all three. But write your newspaper articles from your Barth and Bible.'

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