so many important subjects were touched, regarding which I have now no one
here. To interchange a thought with. I cannot say how much this has refreshed
me and done me good. In many points I see now much clearer. Doubts have
cleared away, and my conviction of the final downfall of cross superstition
and the victory of more enlightened and consistent views has been greatly strengthened.
I greatly wish, I could, in return, be anything to you like what you have been
to me. This is hardly to be expected; but I am too selfish not to continue
if possible, to some extent the enjoyment of interchanging thoughts
with you; and if you find me tiresome, you can easily help yourself by leaving
what I have written, unread. Now do not be angry. I really doubt whether this
letter will be anything but a very prosy affair. However, as my thoughts run, I
shall give them here, and whether you approve of them or not, I know, you will candidly
tell me. — I have just been reading a few pages in Schleiermacher's Christ-
liche Glaubenslehre. The author was my father and mother's intimate
friend and most esteemed teacher; their religious views had been mostly
influenced by him. It was he who baptised me, and his wife was one
of my godmothers. Besides this, I think, he rightly deserves to be consid-
ered (as he generally is in Germany) the first theologian of this Cen-
tury. One of the chief causes of his having been so eminent a theologian,
was perhaps that his point of view (Standpunkt or Gesichtspunkt) was
not exactly theological but rather philosophical and philological.
Son of a Prussian Military Chaplain (Feldprediger) he was at first brought
up in a Moravian institution, which he left in order to pursue the
study of Philosophy. In the letters which he then wrote to his father,
he expressed his decided disbelief of the fundamental doctrines of Christianity.
His father remonstrated earnestly with him, said that at times he had also
had very serious doubts, but he had then believed he ought to follow the
example of Jesus in his non-opposition to certain Jewish doctrines &c, which
though Jesus must clearly have seen that they were erroneous, he still taught his
followers to stick to, in order not to upset entirely their religious ideas. Whether
Schleiermacher the son, afterwards, when he became a student and professor of
theology and a minister of the Christian religion, acted upon this principle
or, whether by means of a poetical adaptation, he became reconciled with Christ-
anity, is not quite clear. At all events he achieved to throw into his views
of Christian religion and doctrine such an amount of true philosophical
ideas, and to clear them so much by critical researches, as was possible, without
incurring the danger of being pushed out of the Church. Still it would be wrong
to call him dishonest in his religious expositions; he believed he had made himself
believe to that extent what he taught others to believe; and with increas-
ing years his positive belief, and his reconciliation with the asserted
doctrines of the Church became more and more decided. — You can
imagine, how great this influence was in Germany theology must have been,
and this influence is now beginning to be felt also in the English Church.
But not only Churchmen, but also Unbelievers can learn a great deal from
his writings. The dualism of theological and philosophical views makes indeed
his style often obscure, and leads not unfrequently to a "double entendre",
when in fact he propounds a doctrine diametrically opposed to the generally
accepted views, without violating at the same time the feelings of orthodox people.
I cannot indeed say that I approve of this method, though I can understand, how
easily

easily one may fall into it, and though I am even conscious of my own inclination
to speak frequently in this fashion, when I dislike to state openly my views.
This cowardice, which I probably share with a great number of my friends, will prob-
ably not be got over entirely, before a bond of union connects those who share
similar views, to strengthen each individual and encouraging him boldly to
face the furious opposition which every open declaration of free opinions
is certain to provoke. But this is, of course, only one of the smallest benefits
of such a union, by which our true convictions must gather strength and
fervency, and our opinions will become clearer, our purposes nobler, &c. To
form such a union, even on a small scale, will, however, be a matter of
difficulty. Yet this difficulty can certainly be overcome; and in this case, it is
at first, I think, to be considered what ought to be the basis and purpose
of such a union, or Church. The latter expression seems to be almost improper
for anything but a Christian union; it being derived from κυριακον,
meaning that i.e. the house of the Lord. It is a very proper term for the Christian
building, which is set aside for the worship of the Lord. This is according to
the notion that God wants to be praised, have his pardon bidden and his
benevolence invoked, like a humane ~~being~~ congnate. This idea which evident-
ly ascribes to the Deity the human passions of wrath and kindness, and
other attributes of humanity, cannot but be considered as blasphemous
if it is seriously meant; otherwise, as a mere poetical idea, it ought not to
form an element of religion. — The purpose of such a
Union cannot be another than the developement of true religion, and
its basis must, therefore, be founded on what we understand hereby.
The result to which F. W. Newman, in his "Phases of Faith" arrives, if
I am not mistaken (for I have not the book at hand), that true religion cannot
be based on a belief of certain historical facts; for all historical facts
are open to doubt and scrutiny. But religion, in order to be the corner stone
of our existence, must consist in something which is above all doubt.
Religion is the harmony of the human mind with God. To be religious
is to try to put oneself into this harmony. It is this a function of the
mind, but not of the intellectual faculties. Historical facts, however, can
only be appreciated and understood by the intellect. — A truly religious
feeling is only adulterated by an admixture of elements foreign to
its nature; they tend to corrupt it, and convert it not infrequently
into exactly the opposite tendency. Through them and not through
religion itself the so called religious insanity and all sorts of bigotry
and fanaticism, with their woeful consequences, are propagated. Many
men of the deepest religious hue are commonly called irreligious, nay
even atheists, because they try to keep religion pure from all such
foreign elements; and many who have scarcely a particle of real religion
are as wrongly called pious and religious, because they have adopted the
formulas of such foul admixtures of religion. — If
religion is to be considered to be the striving of the mind to bring
itself into harmony with God, its basis cannot be a certain definition
of the idea of God. It is the object of all our highest endeavours and noblest
intentions to arrive at a true idea of the nature of things and their causes.
We hope always to come a little nearer to a true understanding; though it is
only too visible that, as long as we retain human nature, we shall never
be able to have more than a very faint idea of the essence of divinity.
And as in common business affairs we do certainly not think it right to
base

they cause, however, a great sale of the book, and will encourage many other heterodox views. — I see now generally the Saturday Review in which I hear you are, I believe. I should like to see the Westminster Review. I have read it in the Library. It was a wish I would have so great a luxury of your own. But at present I cannot afford to buy even a single book; and must rest satisfied with the stock of books I have, which is indeed pretty large. I have, besides, almost as many more lying at home, which I shall get out as soon as I am once firmly settled here. Notwithstanding all rumours, I believe that our Governor Sir George Grey will stay still some years at the Cape, and I shall probably remain at least as long. Indeed, if he were to go to Canada (what I believe, however, will not happen) I should certainly not accompany him, but either stay here, or go to Natal, or to Sydney, or some other portion of Australia. I dare say, you will find me still at Capetown, if you should return in November of December next year, as I think, is your intention. — Almost every letter from Berlin brings me a photograph of one of my relatives; and I find it very nice to [illegible]

The departure of the Cambrian has been delayed till Wednesday 22nd inst. — From Natal we hear of the death of Mr. Jas. Arbuthnot, M.L.C. — The Mixed Commission [illegible] be an [illegible] at the end of the year. The Frere's will be going home [illegible] The Sanatorium is after all to be in this Colony, and the materials are to be retransported to Wynberg. — Last week the public press was filled with indignation at the behaviour of an "ugly, snuffy clergyman" (Dean Douglass) who on the deathbed of a rich old lady (Baroness von Ludwig) managed to squeeze a thousand pounds for the Church out of her legacy. — The report about the Mixed Commission was wrong. The Freres merely wish to go home. — To-day (Tuesday 21st) the Waldensian has not yet been discovered. A vessel (Queen of England) just arrived in False Bay, 60 miles [illegible] Cape Lagulhas, a disabled vessel, which is supposed to be the Waldensian. The Albatross is to convoy the Cambrian to the mail to Natal. Passengers from Natal per Mudens are: Mrs. Marriner & child, Messrs. James Coutts, F. T. Fynney, W. Barnes. — Captain Lester is going to leave us on Thursday (day after to-morrow) to reside at Rondebosch. Mrs. Jamison is going to read Essays and Reviews, which from all I hear, can scarcely help to think a pretty dull book. But the Colonists and the Dutch are great fools certainly to make such a noise about it. They cannot [illegible]

so always at hand. — Monday 21st May at 5 o'clock p. m. the
[illegible] Simms bay announced the arrival in the "Penguin" of the Wal-
de'fa's mail and Passengers. She is beating in under sail. — You will therefore
see your letters sooner rather. What news do they tell you? Are all well at home?
But I must now close. I send you hereby a Cape newspaper.

Believe me,
my dear Miss Charlotte,
your sincerely attached friend
H. E. Steele

In the meantime, more even than hearing from you about these matters of common
interest, I know that you have safely arrived, that the
voyage has done you all sorts of good, and that you feel comfortable at home among
your relations. Please tell me all about them. I like always to be able to imagine not
only how but with whom my friends live, and you have devised
a plan to give in a few words an exact picture of a person. Tell me, further
if you should go to the Rhine, do not forget to Bonn, to see my family. My mother's dress
is Frau Consistorialräthin Roeder, or more simply Frau Professorin. [illegible]
you will have time, behind the Cathedral, four minutes walk from the station. [illegible] my letters from Natal.
Monday 28 May 1861. It is very possible that by this mail you will receive a few lines from
The "Waldensian" has not yet made her appearance. Since Monday 12th there are without news from
her. Then she was seen by a vessel off Cape Agulhas, having apparently burnt her coal, & you
feel of course entertained regarding her fate, as she has many passengers, several
Eastern merchants, Sir Walter Currie and Lady Currie, &c. on board. The steamers have been in
search of her. One, the "Albatross" chartered by the owners of the Waldensian, went as far as Cape Agu
and returned then without having seen any thing of her. It is to be hoped that the other Mail steamers will be more successful.

base our calculations and undertakings upon a basis which we could not clearly understand, so we should go much more decidedly wrong, if upon a vague supposition or undefinable idea, we were to build the foundation of the rule of our life, and derived therefrom the leading ideas, ~~which~~ on which mainly the purposes of our good actions and intentions are to rest. If the idea of God is the great end to which the working of religious activity tends, it cannot be its basis, it cannot be the true point of agreement for a religious community. There is indeed no harm in allowing the individual imagination to form some idea (adequate to its understanding) of its own view of divinity, the last cause and final harmony of things — so long as this is controlled by a consciousness of the necessary imperfectness of every such attempt, and so long as these poetical conceptions are neither made the standard of faith nor the rule of life. But for actual guidance through the intricacies of life, and as the measure by which to measure our own and others' actions we ought certainly not to select the mere productions of our fancy, but only such maxims as, our conscience tells us, are most safely to be relied upon, and are most beyond doubt.

Of course the consciousness of one individual cannot be expected to be in every point the same as that of every another; and although there are many religious ideas, on which a pretty general agreement may be arrived at, they must not in any way be considered as doctrines, but as mere rallying points of the religious mind. We can, therefore, not presume to bind them together into a system which our adherents are to be taught, and which is to be held up against antagonistic systems and theories. It is true that we, naturally shall be led to string them together into harmonious unity, deriving one from the other, and by analogy eliciting fresh ideas and placing ~~into~~ a clearer light old ones. And this mental exercise is certainly beneficial, if at the same time we keep constantly in mind how liable we are to errors as well in our primary suppositions, as in the deductions founded upon them. Thus we deny the possibility of possessing an infallible system, and are fully conscious that, in the best case, we have nothing to rely upon but what appears in the highest degree probable; — we think, we are not only in so far better off than others that we are conscious of our inability of ever arriving at perfect truth, but we believe also to be nearer truth than they, by not resting our convictions upon the fanciful idea of what is indeed inconceivable to us, but upon the safest and most simple conclusions of our mind. Our religious activity differs (as we think, to its advantage) from the so-called positive religions in that, that we try to keep the religious conceptions in their primitive and natural elasticity, and that they do not immediately refer to our relations ~~to~~ with an invisible and incomprehensible being, but to our position in the world as it is, and as we can understand it. And hereby as the chief object of our religious contemplations, is to be considered the position of the individual among his fellow-beings. Great religious truths are indeed impressed upon the mind by every sincere contemplation ~~to~~ of our intimate and indissolable connection with the whole of our race. — we must feel strongly how only by this connection and in consequence of it we are human beings, and how by furthering the advance of the great organism of humankind, we have the only possibility of raising ourselves. But I must end for the present. I have already sufficiently tried your patience, for although, I believe, the subject is interesting to you, yet I am too well aware, what a struggle it has been for me to express my ideas in a foreign language, — not to be conscious, how halting my expositions must be. However, in case you find anything in them to link your own thoughts with, I shall be only too glad to hear what you think of them. In my next letter perhaps I shall become more positive, and try to give you in detail my plan of a religious union, based on humanistic principles, of its organization, objects, &c. &c.

BC151 C411

Government House, Capetown, 15 May 1861

Dear Miss Lloyd,

Since your departure from here, nothing of importance has happened, excepting the arrival of the English Mail yesterday, which has again not brought out the future Mrs. Kennedy. Our company has not received any additions hereby, nor can it receive them, as the house is full for several months. Four gentlemen came in, immediately after yours and the Gillespies' departure. Two of them are MPs, who are here for the session, having left their wives and families at home, — the one (J. D. Thomson) at London, the other (Barnell) at the Knysna, where he has a farm. The latter, who was also chief proprietor of the "Argus," but has, as I hear, now sold his share in this paper, and intends to emigrate again to Canada, is by far the most intelligent of our company, and, to a certain extent, one can talk rationally with him; though he is not without ground called bearish, and is altogether a curious customer to deal with. The three others are rather agreable than otherwise; but we do not see much of them. Mrs. Hill's health is pretty much as it was, and it can scarcely said to have been improved. Capt. Lowther is teaching Mrs. Hill and Miss Mary Fossick netting and nature-printing (of flowers). At table, his place is now next to Mrs. Jamison, whilst I sit at Mrs. Fischer's old place and yours is occupied by Mr. Levicki. Barnell heads the long end, and the two Thomsons sit between him & Capt. Hill. — I am rather improved in health than otherwise; feel stronger and more able to work and to walk. I have been unpacking my books, and have been busy working at Australian, Papuan and South African Languages. As I seem to stand the cool weather which we have had pretty well, I have nearly given up all intention of going to Natal. — Yesterday's mail brought me very good news from home. Regarding my eldest sister's engagement, the inquiries which my mother had made, had enabled her to give consentiously and joyfully her consent, and his own mother has ~~done~~ the same. There will be a little delay till they will marry, — just to enable him to purchase and settle on a larger estate than the one he at present occupies. I cannot say how glad I am, particularly as both my brothers, who have been in Buenos Ayres, describe him in every way as the most excellent man my sister could have engaged herself to. My brother in Buenos Ayres objections were merely founded on his supposition that he was subject to a hereditary disease; but this was found to be not at all the case. I feel this first match in my own family perhaps the more as I know that a similar happiness is for some years at least a forbidden fruit to me. Augusta is such a warmhearted and energetic girl, that I am sure she will make any man happy, who is not quite so hot tempered as she, and whom she loves, and both seems to be the case with Heinrich von Post. He was a most indefatigable and attentive nurse to me, when I was so seriously ill last summer, this makes me the more contented, not to have advised my sisters to accompany me to the Cape, though I should give anything to have sisters with me here. It is indeed true that on many subjects of the greatest interest I could not talk with them at all, they regarding me as a wicked unbeliever, and fearing to enter upon any subjects, on which they thought their belief was founded. This has made me value ~~so much~~ the more the many delightful conversations which I had with you, in which I so