I am trying to find out what are really the great original ideas, which are specific to Christianity, and can be traced to the first founder or founders of this religion. I find this very hard to make out satisfactorily. Most people will search for them in the Sermon ~~from~~ in the Mount; and perhaps the most original Christian sentiments are to be sought here, but I do not see much to admire here, particularly not in the so much praised Blessings. Here evidently the relation in Luke VI, 20 is older than in Matthew. It is the idea of an equibalance between good and evil, of a recompense for suffering, and a castigation for enjoyment which pervades the whole. It is nothing more than the Latin "Vae tibi ridenti, quia mox post gaudia flebis!" (Woe ye who laugh, because soon after your rejoicings you will cry!), or Tillen's proverb, crying when he was going down hill (because he thought of the hard work it would be to go up again) and laughing when walking up hill (rejoicing at the pleasure it would be to go down again). Then abstinence, poverty, meekness, charity are not recommended as virtues by themselves, or on account of the happy relations, into which they put us with our fellow creatures and the harmony they give to our inner feeling, but on account of a future reward, or on account

account of the distinction they will give to the Christian from common men. As such ambition, or such selfish striving for one's own future blessedness (Seligkeit, the ~~being~~ saving of one's soul, as the vulgar English has it) really to be called the highest of human motives? Is there not even a female brute's act of a higher order, who gives her own life willingly for that of her offspring? And the disregard of family affection which is so prominent a feature in primitive Christianity, has always appeared to me in an almost revolting light. For all that, Jesus of Nazareth may, in some way, have been a highly estimable person, though his having been held in so high a veneration for so many centuries, is no proof of it, as we can almost step by step trace the increase of splendour which has been thrown round his figure, and which renders it so extremely difficult to arrive at true historical view of his life doings and teachings. In fact they have induced persons to believe that his whole existence was a myth; but I cannot think this a probable explanation. I think there must have been a real historical nucleus at the bottom, round which all those legendary tales have formed themselves. Yet I do not think that many of the accounts in the Gospels are

BC151 C4.7

are anything but legendary accounts, or traditions noted down a generation at least after the events had taken place; must even appear nothing more than pragmatic inventions, using the example or precept of Jesus of N. to enforce some rule in the Christian community. – Of all the Gospels I am inclined to believe that of Mark to be the eldest, and those of Luke and Matthew as further adorned and increased reproductions. The fourth or John's is certainly the latest, and the boldness of invention with this author exceedes anything his predecessors would have dared to do. – Jesus must certainly have had a great deal of physical magnetic power, and his influence in this regard depended (as with modern magnetisers) ~~on the goo~~ greatly on the the goodwill and trust of the persons upon whom he operated, and who are therefore, equaled to believe in him. In that way belief will save them. Of course that has afterwards been converted (highly absurdly) into believing in certain articles of faith. – That he could not magnetise unbelieving people, is clearly shewn on several occasions, e.g. at Nazareth. That his magnetical power got exhausted, is at least probable from his saying once that power

My dear friend Capetown 31 October 1861

About this time that I am writing now you have probably received my September letter, and the answer to it can not reach me before the middle of December, whilst this letter which I now begin will probably come into your hands about new year's day. I cannot help thinking what all I should have to say to you, if only communication was a little easier and quicker. How I should like to be questioned by you about all things, and question you in turns, and draw you out, – not an easy thing to do I know except for your friends, and for them on that account the more delightful. – You mentioned in your letter of the beginning of September that your sister Lory had mentioned to you an article in Fraser's, on toleration in the Church of England. I have read it now – and with great pleasure. I have also read with great interest Ruskin's "Unto this last," which is full of noble ideas. I cannot, however, but find his style sometimes a little tiresome. – I have been very busy the last days writing my opinion regarding Dr. Callaway's objections to the use of Unkulunkulu as Zulu name for God. I finished it yesterday, and sent it today to the Bishop of Capetown. I wonder what he will think of my treatment of the matter. I think, however, they will find my standing ground too safe to be attacked without danger to themselves. – Last week I was a few days out at Saltriver, staying with Dr. Dale, our Superintendent of education. They are remarkably nice people, and I should much like you to know them. I had not been there since January, and found that I had considerably improved in health strength, and particularly working power since then. I

good account of your improvement in health. I trust that you soon recovered – And I truly hope English air and home feelings will set you entirely right again, and you come back quite rosy cheeked and plump. – As to my going to England or even to Natal, I do not think there is much chance for either, at least not at present; and I think I ought not to go to England at all, as I am pretty sure I should not be able to stand the climate well. Even now a sharp Westwind (our unhealthy Kloofwind) has quite upset me, and I do not feel at all, as even a few days ago I used to do. In such times one feels most, how wretched it is to be so far away from all one's friends. It is true I had long letters, particularly from my brothers and sisters in Buenos Ayres, and from my mother and one brother at home; but that is once a month; – and for all practical purposes the long intervals and far distances render this sort of communication of scarcely any avail. And I have not the slightest hope that with regard to them this will ever be better; for of course I could not think of interrupting the career of one of my brothers for the purpose of having him with me, and I should not like to have the anxiety pressing upon me, if I had one of my sisters with me, to think constantly that she would stand unprotected in a distant land, in case anything happened to me. – If they were, indeed, to that degree independent and self-reliant as I believe you to be, the matter would be different, for I might then trust to their being able to take care of themselves, even if I should be unable to do so. Besides the only one, who in this way might be trusted, my eldest sister, is, as you know, on the eve of going to be married; and another is on account of her health in Buenos Ayres. The two remaining ones Hedwig (who is 25) and Anna (who is 18) could not well be taken from my mother, particularly not Hedwig, whom she could not well spare, Anna is of course her particular pet. – Oh! dearest friend, I am sorely tried. All sense of duty and real love seems to forbid me to indulge in such selfish yearnings. – and I cannot help blaming myself for even suggesting what to you would be merely a self-sacrifice, – but to me such heavenly bliss. I know I have nothing to offer you, broken down in health, poor and without prospects as I am, – a sour old selfish invalide, – but indeed it is too ridiculous, – and I shall, therefore, not say anything more of the irresistible impulse which possesses me and urges me to tell you my intense desire to have a real right to call you entirely my own, – to make my sweet sister indivisible from myself, and to have the first right to her love. And is this not great longing real love? Well, it is truly not that highest kind, which unselfish thought to care more for the wellbeing of the beloved object than for that fulfilment of one's own dearest wishes. Yet I cannot conceive the highest kind of love to be (as we poor human beings are constituted) without a certain portion of this unphilosophical passion. And I must really confess to a not slight share of this human frailty. Oh! Dearest Jemmy, my dove, my treasure, the desire of

of my heart, my constant thought and dream by day and by night, — do you really return a little the love which I feel for you? Oh, do tell me this! let my hope of this not be quite disappointed! and I shall be comforted in the loneliness which to share with me I have not the heart to propose to you now. And yet is it not merely sophistically that I try to conceal my own selfishness before myself, in declaring not to propose that, which I have already declared and confessed to be the greatest desire of my heart? — Oh! really I do not know what to say; when reason and feeling, duty and passion are so at war, one feels so entirely at the mercy of what just every moment comes uppermost, that it would be hopeless to expect any kind of consistency, or even a merely calm consideration of all what ought to be done and said, and what not. But if indeed you ever are to be anything more to me than you are now, then indeed it would be fairly wrong to conceal from you even such struggles of my mind, and not to exchange with you even my inmost thoughts, — a kind of barter, in which I shall be so immeasurably the gainer, that it will indeed almost be unfair to you, — if giving was not sweeter than taking. You know me

BC 151 C4·7

power had gone from him. As to his origin, the genealogies in Matthew and Luke testify that at the time when they were written, (i.e. certainly after the composition of Mark's Gospel) he was still believed to be the legitimate son of Joseph. That he did not himself pretend to a descent from David, is however, clear from the passage Mark XII. 35-37; for, this can have no other meaning than to say that the Messiah can well be no a son of David, as David calls him his Lord. Otherwise it would be merely some puzzle, which had no visible object at all. — Everything narrated of Jesus before his public appearance is entirely fictitious, quite as much as much more decidedly even than the forged pedigrees. Even his baptism by John is an improbability, and still more what follows, for example the calling of his first disciples, &c &c —

13 November 1867. — On Saturday the 9 inst. we were gladdened by the early receipt of the English Mail. How unexpectedly early! I thank you much for your short letter, which, however, contained so many affectionate thoughts that it quite made up for its shortness. I was sorry to hear that you were temporarily unwell; but as you give me a general good

probable that even in the Apostolic time foundations were made for the benefit of the brethren as it is called, and that they like our clergy were supported by the contributions of the laity,— and were of course as anxious to urge upon the latter a voluntary poverty, as for example the Dean of Capetown is desirous of getting everyone to give at least a tenth of his income to the Church. But let us not go too deep into Theology just now. I will merely mention here that in the Westminster Review for October there is a short announcement of my father's Introduction into the Old Testament at the head of the Review of the Theological Literature, which is very fair. In an article in the same number on the "Apocalypse" my father's name is also most honorably mentioned, as the one who first in modern times indicated the true way in which this most important document of primitive Christianity is to be interpreted. Do you know that I think in a few years time my father's name may be quite as familiar (and perhaps more so) to English ears as the name of Niebuhr was ~~some fifteen~~ about thirty years ago. His posthumous works just coming out at a moment when probably a total revolution in English theological and religious feeling is on the eve of breaking out,— a struggle in which they will be most important helps for all inquiring spirits,— I cannot but foresee that he must become a great authority with regard to all researches on the history and origin of the Bible. He would long ago have been regarded in such a light, if he had published more, instead of almost entirely devoting himself to his University Lectures, which, therefore, contain the fruits of nearly fifty years of the most industrious application to these studies.— It is true with very many of my father's opinions, which were the results of his investigations, I cannot agree, particularly with regard to several books of the New Testament,— but this does not alter my esteem of his most excellent critical method.— In fact standing on the shoulders of his labours I used perhaps to think too little of them, and of the state of German theology in general,— until I became acquainted with English theology, when I learnt to esteem the immense progress which in the fatherland had been made. There are, however, at the present day scarcely any theologians in Germany, who pursue their researches with such a spirit of fairness and Unbefangenheit, or if they do, they have not the critical acumen which my father had.

But

But indeed I am afraid you will fancy me quite a Kafir falling so much into ancestor worship as I do here. — But before you come back to South Africa, you must necessarily go to Bonn and see my mother, whom I worship greatly, and indeed she deserves it, — on account of the great nobleness and sincerity of her spirit, her fine intellectuality, and most generous and self devoted mind. Oh! she is indeed the greatest blessing to our family. But you have seen her likeness here at Capetown. She is besides a most courageous and independent person, though a thorough lady in feeling and manners. Unhappily she does not speak English, though she has picked up so much of late, as to be able to follow the general current of an English conversation. My sisters, however, talk fluently English, and my brothers can make themselves understood. — But I must end. You have no idea, how anxiously I shall await your next three letters, the answers to my two last and to this present letter! — Oh! dearly beloved, do I really act rightly in sending you this letter? I am so thoroughly perplexed that I cannot help but trusting that you will see what is right, and if there is too much of human weakness in my thoughts, you will forgive it, and, however, you may reply me, not be angry with one who dearly loves you, and who will always be, your's most affectionately Wm. H. I. Bleek

BC 151 CL 17

me too well not to suppose that I meant this as an empty compliment, — but I really feel that though, as riper in years, I may in many things be farther advanced in understanding, yet all this will be nothing in comparison with that almost intuitive intelligence of what is really good, wise, noble and elevating in human nature, the possession of which makes your dear picture so almost venerable to me. Not that I do not think that you have not your faults and failings, like all we other mortal beings, — but you would be awful, if you did not also possess some alloy of human imperfection and folly. Indeed of the latter quality I hope you possess at least an average share, — otherwise I am sure you would have long ago lost all patience with such a foolish person as your humble servant. Why did St Luke not say "Blessed are the foolish, for they shall be filled with wisdom" and "Woe to the Wise, for their wisdom shall be converted into foolishness." Indeed St. Matthew says something very similar "Blessed are the poor in spirit" &c. Though I can hardly see, why theirs should be the kingdom of heaven. The original which Luke has preserved here "Blessed are the poor," and "Woe unto you that are rich" is more easily understood, as poverty was a great merit among the primitive Christians, and they are constantly urged to give away their goods for the benefit of the community, — and it is probable