

TELEGRAPH OFFICE,
SHARPTHORNE.

Aug 31. 1919.

CRIPPS'S CORNER,
FOREST ROW,
SUSSEX.

Dear Fisher

Thanks for your last letter, with analysis of Chap. II, which does make the matter clearer to me. With almost all you say I am in agreement, and I am inclined to accept the importance of this factor in racial decline. Therefore I am most anxious you should go on and make a good job of it. I doubt if I have any

further useful criticisms to
make at present, but will keep
your letter and write if
anything turns up. Where I am
doubtful is as to your views
as to the growth of conscience.
I think I mentioned the dual
aspect of this question which is
forced on my mind; how I
arrive at different conclusions
when I look in my mind and
when I look at the mind of
others. I think most philosophers
who agree that there is no ~~such~~

more reason to neglect one set of
conclusions than the other. They
say men of science are quite
wrong merely to rely on internal
facts; and I agree. But taking
the merely external view,
Conscience has been developed by
selection I fully admit. The
case of offspring is the most
ancient and most highly developed
of all the instincts. The religious
ban on infanticide seems to be
nothing but an expression of this
fundamental instinct. Religion is
always backing up the social
instincts against the individual
instincts; as in regard to murder.
A pronouncement about infanticide

might indicate nothing new
as regards instinct. As to
abortion, reason might have
made it apparent that it was
equivalent to infanticide, and
therefore added a new force
to the religious support to the
very ancient ^{social} instinct. If you
are right in thinking ^{a great}
^{change in} innate instincts can be so
quickly developed, why ^{do} not
celebrity and late marriages
come under the religious ban?
I believe ^{fundamental} instincts take far
longer to develop, and that
historical proofs of a change of
innate feeling in such
fundamental instincts must

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be accepted with great
reserve. It would only be
small changes of mentality I
should expect to find. But
I confess I am writing this
rapidly with insufficient
thought. And even if I am
right, it affects your final
position but little. Perhaps
I should say that I should
hardly expect in historic
times to find any clear traces
of an evolution of mental
attitude, but that you might

and would have selections
of existing types into different
strata of society, which would
bring about the ~~the~~ evil results.
But if ~~that~~ so, would not
infanticide be more tolerated
by the selected upper strata
than the poor? And does a
religious movement come from
above or below? Don't take
much notice of this, as it is
all so crude. But - do
write.

Yours sincerely
L. Darwin

P.S. Dill talked such
nonsense about race that
I did not mention it. He
said in effect that the
influx from Asia Minor
could not have effected the
question because the race
was so similar to that of
the Romans. I might be
able to find the quotation