

Essexdon Dec 4 '96

My dear Spencer,

Your letter of Nov 21st reached me today by midday post. I was in the midst of a sermon which I have to preach tomorrow, & I grieve to say that I dismissed it from my mind & turned to carnal thoughts. How are the mighty fallen!

I read your letter with great delight. You are a born anthropologist, & as for giving you advice, the only word it is necessary for me to say is "Go on, & prosper." With Eslier you are now doing an unique work, & you are just the man to do it.

Thousands of men would see nothing, or only a blurred jumble, where you get to the root of the matter by a keen instinct such as is frequently observed in the lower animals. I have been trying to get myself into a proper frame of mind for rebuking you for the scandalous deception you have practised upon those poor simpleminded savages, but the carnal nature prevails, & I can't. Moreover conscience comes in, &

reminds me that I have done much the same myself. That however does not excuse you, & I trust you will have grace enough to repent - not however before you have let the deception have its perfect work. Penitence & penitence might spoil many things.

But seriously, the only thing I can think of is to suggest that an inquiry should be made as to the connection between the stones & the boat-rovers. I have a notion that the stones are the "originals", so to speak, & that the "sticks" derive their virtue from them. This of course is only conjecture - what the good old Baron used to call a "suggestion" - but one gets light sometimes by following up a conjecture. At all events, if there is nothing in it, he finds out that there is nothing, & that is a gain.

Of course, I can think of many other things, but it would be folly to write them down, because you know them as well as I do, & you are on the way to know them a great deal better. If I had time to read fitly

paper, which came by the same post with your letter, I might find something to say; but I am writing this note at once & in haste, so as to catch the mail, & there is no time to spare. I am going ~~out~~ & into the country this evening, & cannot defer writing till my return. Gillen's paper opened on a page which is full of evidence of descent through the father. The line of descent wants pointing out for the sake of students whose attention has not been called to the difference it causes. Men accustomed to the other line will be puzzled by many things which are seen at once to fall into orderly sequence when the initial fact is known. I also at the first glance saw that the knowledge Mr Gillen subsequently attained will make valuable additions to some of his statements. I cannot write to him now - as soon as I have finished this note I must go back to that Seminar again - but I beg that you will give him my hearty thanks for his paper & my congratulations on

The splendid work he is doing. Accept
my blessing on you both. It is most
delightful to an old battered faggy to
see you going on from conquering
and to conquer. You will smite the
Philistines hip & thigh with your
facts - I was going to say "like
Samson"; but I remember his weapon,
& refrain.

Howitt came to see me at my
office last Wednesday to tell me he
had had a telegram from you; but the
wretched office-boy told him I was
not in, & so I did not see him. I
have named that boy Magor-missabib,
because he is a terror to himself & his
friends. Your intimate knowledge of
Scripture will at once take your
mind to the passage concerned.

I shall post your letter this
evening to Howitt's address. It is no
use posting earlier, for this is Saturday
& the last post is gone. He will not
get it till Monday evening.

With kindest remembrances to
Mr Giffen,

Yours sincerely,

Loximer Fison