

refrain from others; but there is not the shadow of proof that they have any consciousness of right and wrong. Their actions are all prompted by instinct, or by the fear of punishment, or the hope of reward. There is no conscience within to approve or to condemn; nor have they any idea of a Moral Governor, who will reward virtue and punish vice. This, the grandest idea of which created beings are capable, is man's sole prerogative of all beings in this lower world, and it constitutes his highest distinction.

It may be said — and correctly, too, as I admit, though contrary to long-received opinions — that there are degraded races of men, who not only have no idea of any being superior to themselves, but no moral sense to accuse or excuse their actions; so that not even murder, or any other monstrous crime, will awaken the slightest self-condemnation;* and hence it is maintained that man's boasted moral nature is the result of conventional rules, and therefore not an original implanted power of divine origin. But the existence of moral feelings is too nearly universal in the human bosom, and too nearly identical in character in all hearts, to be referred to fluctuating human opinions. And the very few cases in which the moral sense seems to be wanting are explained plausibly by admitting that extreme degradation and unrestrained wickedness, committed from generation to generation, can so sear the moral sensibilities that they seem utterly dead for a time. Nevertheless, let the truth be poured in upon such a soul, with an accompanying divine influence, and moral life will be again awakened, whose cords shall vibrate to the slightest touch.

But not so with the brute. By no process can you awaken

* See Moffat's *Southern Africa*, pp. 89, 177, 182, &c., sixth edition.