

rious retrospective view of my past life, I came to a stand, whether or not to pursue the same course I had done. I saw that it had been marked with folly, disappointment, and trouble. Having many friends, of rather a dissipated character, and fearful that I might contract bad habits that would, in time, prove the ruin of both my family and myself, I resolved to enlist my feeble exertions in the temperance cause. This step called forth some persecution, with the loss of some (rather warm) friends; but I found my conscience was not injured by it. Thinking now on the general good and evil and their causes, as existing in the community at large, I was constrained to acknowledge that nearly all the good is instigated and set in action by the Christians, while a general recklessness to the promotion of education, temperance, and other benevolent objects, pervade the ranks of those who regard the Scriptures as a "cunningly devised fable." Why error (as I conceived Christianity to be) should so triumph over truth in good works, was to me a problem which I could not solve. I knew there was a God, and that he was a good God, and that all good things must meet with his approval. I immediately began to inquire more closely into the evidences of the Christian religion. The nice adjustment, order, and harmony observable in the works of nature throughout the vast empire of God, had afforded me an agreeable theme for contemplation. I could find no disagreement of parts or inharmonious jar in the grand organization of the physical universe. But the mind of man I found was of a nature not to be satisfied or harmonized with material or finite objects. Here was a confusion apparent in the intellectual world which I could not account for, and which was altogether irreconcilable with the character of God, as manifested in the material creation. The fault I knew could not be attributed to him. Yet the mind of a strictly moral man, I found, from conversation with candid friends, as well as my own experience, has in its own nature principles warring against its harmony and happiness. Why this is so was to me some time a mystery. At length it entered my mind that my native gloomy and discontented feelings might be the result of what Christians call "our fallen nature," and that harmony might be produced if I could become reconciled to God by believing in Jesus Christ with a heart unto righteousness. This Christians told me was the case with them; and that they were also discontented before their conversion; but now they were extremely happy under all circumstances with religion. If this were true, I knew it would make the harmony in creation complete. I perceived also the power which man possessed, according to the plan of salvation, to be made happy or miserable, constituted a great part of his intelligence; for if he had no such power, he could not have a knowledge of what is misery or what is happiness. They are known only by their degrees of opposition. This also makes the soul that has been relieved from the burden of sin, by a blessed Saviour, grateful to that Saviour, and love to praise his name. The Divine instinct has implanted in the human mind, which is ever unsatisfied with any thing but the anticipation

of immortal joys, as a proof of the immortality of the soul, the same as the instinct of a bird that never saw an egg, prompts it to build a nest, is a proof that the bird will lay eggs; or the instinct of a duck or goose, which prompts it to plunge into the water at first sight, is a proof that it can swim. Whenever God has given an instinct, or longing desire to his creatures, we find that he has made something suitably to answer or satisfy this instinct or desire.

A book on the Evidences of Christianity, by Charles Bennett, arrested my attention. Bennett was a philosopher, and his extensive historical knowledge in furnishing him with means, and his clear and correct mode of reasoning, established certain truths in my mind which had been previously overlooked. I now viewed the plan of salvation as disclosed in the sacred volume, to be something extraordinary indeed! Under these feelings, I went one Sunday evening in January last, by the invitation of a neighbour, to the Methodist church, to hear a sermon by the presiding elder. I was a very attentive listener to the word preached that evening. The apparent conscious boldness and sincerity of the minister, while expatiating on the truth of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, made me think it *might all be true*; that Jesus died for sinners; that a change of heart might be the consequence of ardent prayer for mercy; and that the grave might not be our eternal prison house. While under these impressions, though not in the least agitated, I prayed ardently in my mind, that the same Jesus whom he preached, and seemed to put so much confidence in, would, were it possible, give me some token that these things which had appeared so long a mysterious delusion, leading the people into blind enthusiastic devotion, were really true. No sooner had my mind become stationary on this subject than I felt a *chilling tremour about the heart*, which soon became diffused throughout my whole system in a fearful shuddering sensation. The service was not more than half over, yet I became anxious to leave the house, from a fear that seemed to possess me that I should be converted that evening. I thought I was not yet prepared in my business or family for conversion. To shake off this *trembling sensation*, I endeavoured to absent my mind from the subject; but this being of no avail, I left the house in company with a friend, under a burden of feeling I shall never forget. I endeavoured to pray that night, but could not. The next morning I felt very much mortified on reflecting on what had occurred to me. I was ashamed, as I knew I must have been the object of notice in the church. I knew that the powerful conviction I had felt was in answer to my prayer; yet in twenty-four hours after, being interrogated by a friend on the subject, I *denied it*, and attributed my feelings to another cause. This was to me quite astonishing, in thus having a disposition to lie on such an important subject. I could account for it in no other way but that my heart must be very *terong*, and beyond the power of curing. I remained in this state of mind for about five months; sometimes striving to disbelieve the word of God from the mysteries it contained, and also from what I conceiv-