

most easily detected, in less than two months from his crucifixion, we find no less than five thousand people openly profess to be his disciples. And it should be remembered that they were not induced to make this profession for the sake of wealth or worldly honours, because Christ had promised them neither, but told them that they should be hated of all men for his name-sake, and that he himself was not as well off in worldly goods as a fox or a bird. He told them plainly, that to be his disciples would cost them their lives; therefore nothing but the clearest conviction of his divine mission could have induced them to become his followers. It is utterly impossible for the Apostles and their associates to have been deceived, because the things on which they rest their testimony are matters of sense, not matters of opinion; besides it is impossible that they should be deceived respecting the miracles they wrought themselves. It is equally impossible that they could have been deceivers, because there is not one mark of deception in their characters.—They always did good, and never did harm; they persevered all their days in preaching and practising the purest morality, and at last laid down their lives in support of the same. If they were impostors, I would enquire, what are the marks of truth and honesty?

Either God or man must be the author of the Bible; this position is too plain to admit of dispute. And it is equally certain that if men are the authors of it, they must be either good men, or bad men. The prophets and apostles who recorded the truths of the Bible, could not have been bad men, for the following reasons. 1. Because in their characters there is not one trait of bad men; they never spoke nor acted wickedly in all their lives, after they became prophets or apostles. 2. Because the histories of their lives exhibit every characteristic of good men; they unremittingly taught and practised righteousness, and laboured all their days, and at last laid down their lives to support virtue. To say they were bad men, would be an outrage on common sense; it would be the same as to say that very good men are very bad men.

It is impossible that bad men could have been the authors of the Bible, because it teaches all men to be good, and threatens bad ones with the wrath of God, and the torments of hell for ever and ever. If the apostles and prophets were impostors, they did not believe what they preached, and if so, then undeceived, wilful impostors, must have invented the purest system of morals that ever was preached on earth, denied themselves of nearly all the comforts of this life, and voluntarily submitted to the most ignominious and painful deaths, all in support of virtue; when, at the same time, they hated it in their hearts, and did not believe that either God or man required them to do so, or that they would receive the least benefit by so doing.

It is equally clear that good men could not be the authors of the Bible; the men who wrote it constantly and unequivocally declare, they were not the authors of it, but that they only spoke and wrote what the Lord revealed to them; therefore, if they did not receive these things by divine inspiration, they must have been constantly in the practice of lying wilfully and knowingly, and therefore could not have been good men. If then neither bad nor good men were the authors of the