

word or deed which certainly we can ascribe to Him. The witness of St. Paul is ruled out. Jesus of Nazareth lived, and died a violent death. He exercised enormous personal influence upon His disciples, and produced on them the impression of unexampled goodness and gentleness. Some floating traditions concerning Him have come down to us. At a longer or shorter period after His death, His adherents found themselves unable to account for His works and words, or to persuade the world that it ought to submit to their representation of His teachings, except by announcing that He was God Incarnate. This is nearly or quite all we may assert safely about Him. Whatever authority therefore He might possess becomes useless because of our ignorance.

But, in truth, no authority is permitted to belong to Him. He may occupy a unique position as a Leader and Helper of men, as Pattern and Encouragement, but He can be no more than this to us. Any higher claim put forth for Him or by Him must be disallowed peremptorily.¹ Thus far the search for the seat of authority in religion ends in a perfect blank.

This, then, is the goal of our prolonged journey. We may argue from nature to God. We may believe that our personality involves His, and accept conscience as vindicating the obligatory power of right. We may trace

¹ Dr. Martineau can never be consciously unfair. But in conducting an argument, you may not begin by *dismissing* your opponent's contention. Dr. Martineau must admit that if Jesus Christ were truly God Incarnate, the sentiments which he condemns as spoken by Jesus or His disciples would be perfectly legitimate and natural. But half his reasons for rejecting the Gospels are drawn from these self-same sayings, which are *assumed* to be incorrect. Again, endeavouring to show that claims to "revelations" are necessarily untrustworthy, and are only unconscious figures of speech, he tells a remarkable story of a "Wesleyan elder" and "a stonebreaker," both simple-hearted and illiterate men, in which the latter claimed to have received a distinct Divine message from the Lord for a woman in spiritual trouble. Dr. Martineau argues that the stonebreaker mistook the workings of his own mind for a revelation from God, and that St. Paul must have fallen into a like error. That the retailer has not inquired very carefully into the story his phraseology proves, as it is utterly inconsistent with that of the religious body to which he ascribes it. But does Dr. Martineau soberly mean to insinuate that St. Paul stood on no higher intellectual level than that of the two uneducated labourers to whom he refers? The comparison cannot be sustained for an instant.