

assumed in the Incarnation, and are therefore brothers to the Son of God. As these Christian principles gradually permeated the nations, the new civilization began its beneficent influence for the comfort of these afflicted members of the human family. Many other instances might be adduced; but enough has been said to show that St. John spoke truly as a prophet, when he declared; "This is the victory which overcometh the world, our faith."

It is worth while to recall now what we have said of the nature of faith, to try to understand it better; since we see its importance, nay, even its necessity, to civilization, and consequently, to human happiness as well as to eternal salvation. We have defined it as an assent of the mind, firm, decided and irrevocable, to revealed truth, on a living authority. That is what it was in the Apostles' time, and it cannot be anything else now, and still be faith. It is not fancy, imagination, sentiment, or opinion; but, to be faith, it must be a firm belief or unwavering acceptance of truth on authority. Everyone knows we can be just as sure of a thing on authority as by personal investigation. Our ordinary citizen is as sure that there is such a place as London, as if he had the advantage of a visit to that great metropolis of the world. We also accept the demonstrations of the astronomers and mathematicians, that have gone before us, with the same assurance as if we had gone through the process ourselves. These are two legitimate ways of ascertaining facts,—personal investigation and authority.

Nothing is further from the truth, than to suppose that we believe without sufficient or reasonable grounds. It is not enough to have sentiment and feeling favourable to the doctrine taught. While these may accompany and follow faith, they are so far from constituting it, that they are not even necessary for it. Human intelligence must be brought into action to ascertain that God has spoken; then, without pretending to understand all about the truth divinely revealed, the will is brought to bear upon the mind, and obliges it to accept the truth, because God has made it known. This brings our attention to a fact not always recognized,—faith is a moral, as well