

14 PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS OF RELIGION

sensuous and unspiritual setting. In this way Christianity, at first swathed in the garments of the Jewish ceremonial law, was purified and universalized; and a similar process has been going on in modern times, by which it has been stripped of the limitations imposed upon it by the application to it of forms of thought borrowed from the later Greek philosophy and by the confinement of its free spirit in the bonds of medieval dualism. Thus the primitive faith, though it contained a principle that, as I believe, can never die—the principle that only in unity with the Infinite can man realize himself—has come to an ever clearer comprehension of its true self. By disengaging the principle which operates in simple faith, it is seen to have a wider and more intimate application, as when, to borrow the imagery of Goethe's fairy-tale, the shepherd's hut has expanded into the temple of humanity by the ever clearer realization of what is meant by love of one's neighbour. It cannot therefore be said that the process of formulating faith has nothing to do with its perfection; for that process does minister to its perfection by revealing it to itself. We may say of it what Shakespeare says of the eye:

"Nor doth the eye itself,
That most pure spirit of sense, behold itself,
Not going from itself; but eye to eye opposed
Salutes each other with each other's form.
For speculation turns not to itself,
Till it hath travelled and is mirrored there,
Where it may see itself."¹

No doubt the development of faith comes largely through the influence of men of religious genius, who raise it to a higher potency; but even here the

¹ *Troilus and Cressida*, act III., scene iii., ll. 107-111.