

THE RIDDLE OF THE UNIVERSE

ment in Christianity; like most of the other Christian dogmas, it has been borrowed from earlier religions. Out of the sun-worship of the Chaldean magi was evolved the Trinity of Ilu, the mysterious source of the world; its three manifestations were Anu, primeval chaos; Bel, the architect of the world; and Aa, the heavenly light, the all-enlightening wisdom. In the Brahmanic religion the Trimurti is also conceived as a "divine unity" made up of three persons—Brahma (the creator), Vishnu (the sustainer), and Shiva (the destroyer). It would seem that in this and other ideas of a Trinity the "sacred number, three," as such—as a "symbolical number"—has counted for something. The three first Christian virtues—Faith, Hope, and Charity—form a similar *triad*.

According to the *amphitheists*, the world is ruled by *two* different gods, a good and an evil principle, God and the Devil. They are engaged in a perpetual struggle, like rival emperors, or pope and anti-pope. The condition of the world is the result of this conflict. The loving God, or good principle, is the source of all that is good and beautiful, of joy and of peace. The world would be perfect if His work were not continually thwarted by the evil principle, the Devil; this being is the cause of all that is bad and hateful, of contradiction and of pain.

Amphitheism is undoubtedly the most rational of all forms of belief in God, and the one which is least incompatible with a scientific view of the world. Hence we find it elaborated in many ancient peoples thousands of years before Christ. In ancient India Vishnu, the preserver, struggles with Shiva, the destroyer. In ancient Egypt the good Osiris is opposed by the wicked Typhon. The early Hebrews had a similar dualism