

## THE RIDDLE OF THE UNIVERSE

wardly disfigured by an immoderate crowd of human and animal figures! Not less elevated are the silent prayers and the simple devotional acts of the Koran when compared with the loud, unintelligible verbosity of the Catholic Mass and the blatant music of their theatrical processions.

Under the title of *mixotheism* we may embrace all the forms of theistic belief which contain mixtures of religious notions of different, sometimes contradictory, kinds. In theory this most widely diffused type of religion is not recognized at all; in the concrete it is the most important and most notable of all. The vast majority of men who have religious opinions have always been, and still are, *mixotheists*; their idea of God is picturesquely compounded from the impressions received in childhood from their own sect, and a number of other impressions which are received later on, from contact with members of other religions, and which modify the earlier notions. In educated people there is also sometimes the modifying influence of philosophic studies in maturer years, and especially the unprejudiced study of natural phenomena, which reveals the futility of the theistic idea. The conflict of these contradictory impressions, which is very painful to a sensitive soul, and which often remains undecided throughout life, clearly shows the immense power of the *heredity* of ancient myths on the one hand and the early *adaptation* to erroneous dogmas on the other. The particular faith in which the child has been brought up generally remains in power, unless a "conversion" takes place subsequently, owing to the stronger influence of some other religion. But even in this supersession of one faith by another the new name, like the old one, proves to be merely an outward label covering a