THE BUILDING OF THE KOSMOS AND OTHER LECTURES, DELIVERED AT THE EIGHTEENTH ANNUAL CONVENTION OF THE THEOSOPHICAL SOCIETY AT ADYAR, MADRAS, DECEMBER 27TH, 28TH, 29TH, 30TH, 1893

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ANNIE BESANT

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BY

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PREFACE.

THE four lectures printed in this volume were delivered to the delegates and members of the Theosophical Society, assembled for the Annual Convention at Adyar, Madras, on December 27th, 28th, 29th, 30th, 1893. They were intended to show the value of the teachings of H. P. Blavatsky as a guide to the obscurer meanings of the Hindû Sacred books, and so to vindicate at once the usefulness of the Theosophical and the Hindû doctrines. They were intended also to show the identity of these doctrines, and to prove that any one who believes the Theosophical teachings must accept those of the *Vedas* and the *Purânas* on fundamental matters. That Theosophy is a fragment of the Brahma Vidyâ of pre-Vaidic days, that the Shruti are the best exoteric presentment of Brahma Vidyâ, that the *Purânas* were intended to give to the class excluded from the study of the *Vedas* the spiritual truths contained in the latter in a concrete form easy of assimilation—such were the ideas which sought expression in these lectures.

My acceptance of Theosophical teachings has to me, from the beginning, implied the acceptance of the Hindû Scriptures as the mine out of which the gold of Spiritual Knowledge was to be dug. As a Philosophy, Theosophy may be held intellectually apart from Hindûism as from all Religions, though reproducing on many points the Advaita Vedânta; but if any attempt be made to draw from it spiritual sustenance, if it be taught as Religion as well as Philosophy, then in the Hindûism which is its earliest and fullest exoteric presentment will the need for worship find its completest satisfaction. I do not mean that devotion may not clothe itself in various religious garbs; and that if a man have a Religion when he becomes a Theosophist, he will not naturally seek in that Religion the spiritual food he requires and will not therein find it. But if he comes into Theosophy, as I did, from Materialism, then he will most probably in his devotion adopt the ancient Sânskrit forms preserved in Hindûism, with which he has become intellectually familiar in his philosophical studies. Theosophy has been to me not only intellectually but also devotionally satisfying, and devotional Theosophy finds in Hindûism its most ancient and most natural expression. The student of Brahma Vidyâ may thus as a Bhakta become also Hindû, recognizing that Gnyânam and Bhakti are both necessary for the evolution of the spiritual life.

I say these few words in explanation of my own

position as Theosophist and Hindû that will be found running through these lectures, and in repudiation of the absurd story that I have been converted to Hindûism since I came to India. I became a Hindû with my full and complete acceptance of Theosophy as taught by Occultists, and there has been no change save an ever-increasing clearness of vision, an ever-expanding knowledge, and an ever-growing depth of satisfaction in the teachings embraced in 1889.

ANNIE BESANT.

Ludhiana, Feb., 1894.