

**PROTESTANT MODERNISM
OR, RELIGIOUS
THINKING FOR
THINKING MEN, PP. 13-171**

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Protestant Modernism or, Religious Thinking for Thinking Men, pp. 13-171 by David C. Torrey

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BY
DAVID C. TORREY

MINISTER IN

BEDFORD, MASSACHUSETTS

AUTHOR'S EDITION

1910

TO THE MEMORY OF
MY FATHER,
JASON EPHRAIM TORREY
WHO TAUGHT ME TO THINK FREELY,
THIS BOOK IS
AFFECTIONATELY DEDICATED

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INTRODUCTION

PRIMITIVE RELIGIOUS IDEAS

THE introductory statement of the Hebrew scriptures is that, "In the beginning the gods created the heaven and the earth." At just what period in the world's history this conviction became established in the thinking of any considerable group of men is uncertain, but we may consider it as marking a stage in the development of religious ideas. Though it occurred many centuries ago, yet in comparison with the ages preceding it in which primitive men groped after knowledge, it is a modern conviction, and a tre-

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mendous advance upon the ideas which had been held.

We have no written record of the confused ideas of men, slowly verging to conviction and expression, in the ages which intervened between the first dawning of self-consciousness and this formulated conviction that personal gods are the authors of all things. Primitive men were very many thousands of years reaching this conviction. We can judge of the processes by which they reached it only by the study of the religious ideas of those races of men who in various parts of the world have been belated, and are still primitive in mind, and by the examination of the primitive conceptions of our own minds, which primitive conceptions are not wholly erased by instruction

INTRODUCTION

in the inherited religious conceptions of our day. In the study of the development of these primitive religious ideas we may note that we are dealing exclusively with processes of the human mind. We can judge of the influences upon the mind from without only by their fruits in the conceptions and convictions of the mind itself. This is simply saying that if revelation exists we can be aware of the fact and of the results only by the ideas and convictions which we find in men's minds.

To affirm that religion is wholly a mental operation does not mean that it is a matter of pure reasoning, for the mental processes include also the imagination, the emotions and the will. We do, however, rule all sensuous feelings out of religion, for